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ABSTRACT

George C. Marshall (1880-1959), head of the U.S. Army in World War II, Secretary of State (1947-49), Secretary of Defense (1950-51), and Nobel Peace Prize winner (1953), was one of the late people as a child. He liked to play and was reasonably athletic, anxious to try out new ideas, and was particularly interested in history, but he was not especially good in school. This book traces General Marshall's life from childhood to old age. Following the "Introduction" (Larry I. Bland), chapters in the book are: (1) "The Uniontown Years" (A Small Town Boyhood); (2) "VMI Years" (First Class Yankee); (3) "A Young Officer" (From the Philippines to the Great War); (4) "Duty with Pershing" (Lessons from the Top); (5) "The Making of a General" (From Ft. Benning to Vancouver Barracks); (6) "Army Chief of Staff Years" (Preparing for War); (7) "Army Chief of Staff" (War Duty in Washington); (8) "The Statesman Years" (From Ancient Land to the Marshall Plan); and (9) "Service without Uniform" (A Recall and a Long Rest). Includes 78 notes. Contains a 19-item selected bibliography. (BT)

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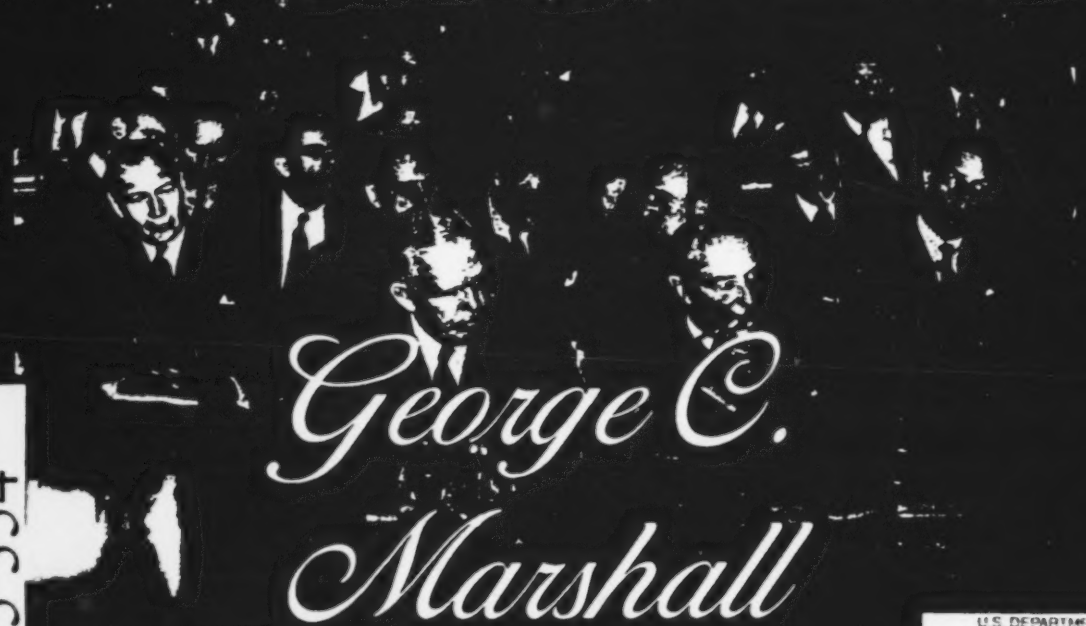
America's Hero

to the World



George C. Marshall

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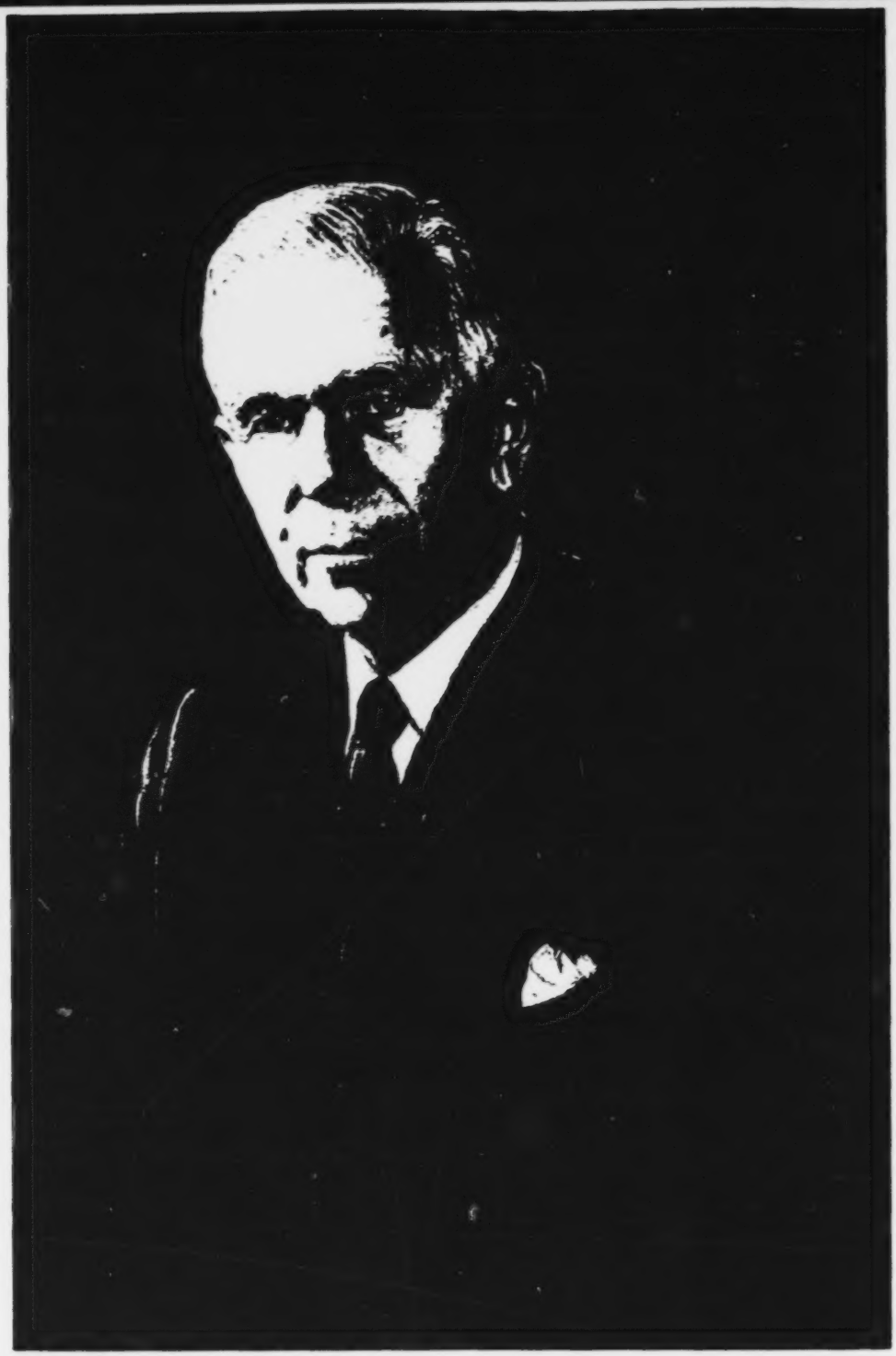

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America's Hero to the World,
George C. Marshall

by
Mary Sutton Skutt
and
Rachel Yarnell Thompson

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AMERICA'S HERO

TO THE WORLD

GEORGE C. MARSHALL

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George C. Marshall, age 5

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AMERICA'S HERO TO THE WORLD

GEORGE C. MARSHALL

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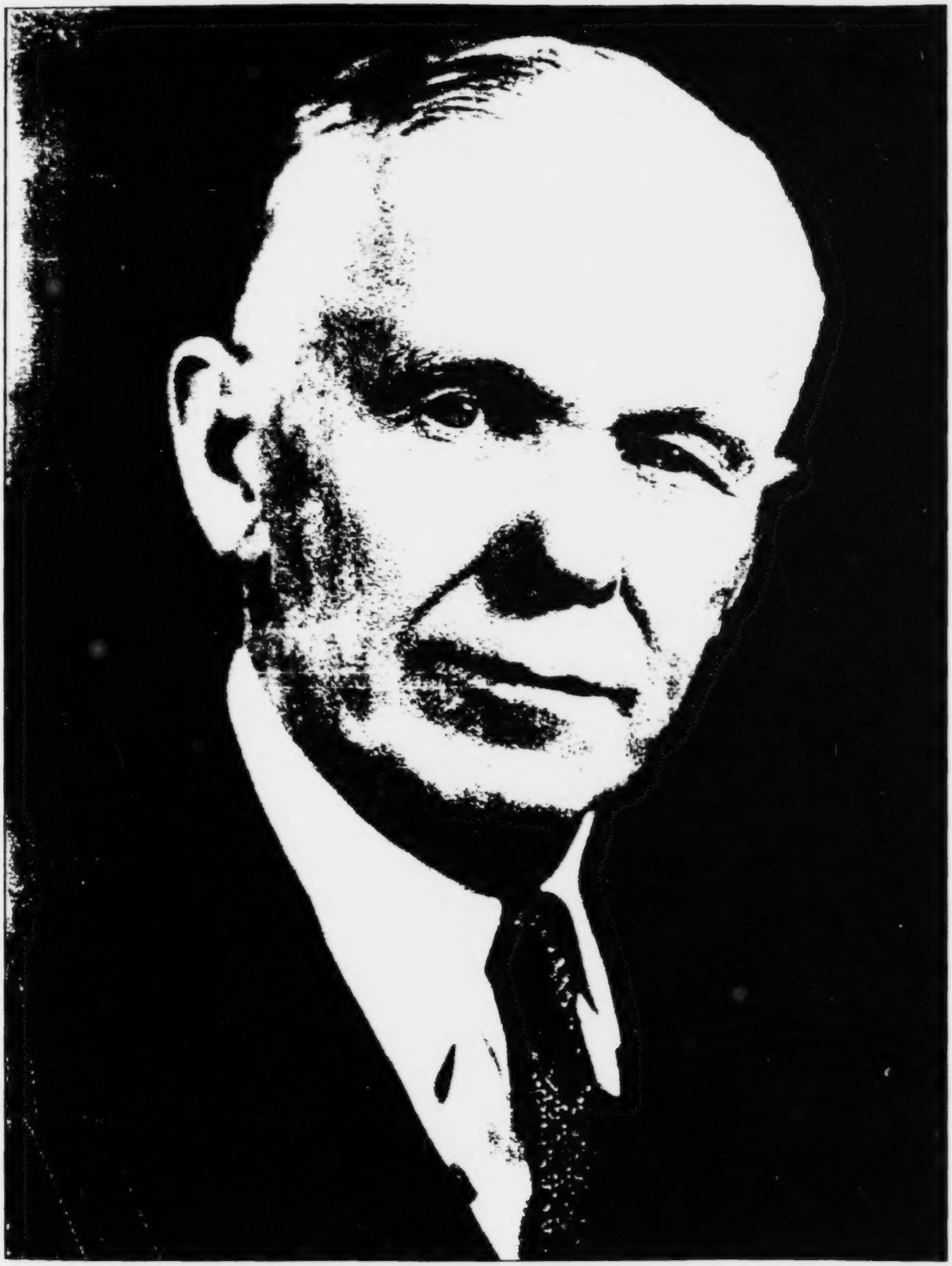

George C. Marshall, December 31, 1880 - October 16, 1959

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INTRODUCING GEORGE C. MARSHALL

Some people seem to demonstrate as children that they are going to achieve great success in life, but others are "late bloomers." George C. Marshall, head of the U.S. Army in World War II, Secretary of State (1947-49), Secretary of Defense (1950-51), and Nobel Peace Prize winner (1953), was one of the "late" people as a child. He liked to play and was reasonably athletic, anxious to try out new ideas, and was particularly interested in history, but he was not especially good in school.

George Marshall was determined to go to the Virginia Military Institute, and he understood that he would have to work harder than many other cadets to overcome his disadvantages. He thought about how the "system" at VMI worked—careful obedience to orders, learning the many rules and ways of behaving, careful organization of time, dedication to duty, honesty, and courtesy. Marshall did not let difficulties, bad luck, or the foolishness of others distract him from his goal of a career in the military. His philosophy worked. He was made the highest ranking cadet in each of his final three years at VMI-and he did reasonably well in his studies too, graduating in Civil Engineering.

Marshall knew that even after school was over he had to educate himself constantly and to continue to employ those traits that had made him successful at VMI. He studied his profession carefully, because he knew that a detailed grasp of the U.S. Army "system" was essential to success. For example, in the Philippine Islands in 1903 his horse fell on him and broke his ankle. He refused to sit around in barracks playing cards and drinking, like some other men, but learned a new job: how to handle the paperwork for a large military organization. He knew that such knowledge would some day be important. Marshall behaved this way all the time; there was no lemon that life could serve him that he could not turn into lemonade through hard work and study.

An important reason that Marshall achieved his high offices in the 1940s was his honesty and trustworthiness. Soldiers above and below him in rank knew that Marshall would not lie, cheat, or steal or tolerate people who did. People learned that they could trust Marshall. Marshall had also thought about his own weaknesses as a soldier and leader; he was a master at picking subordinates to compensate for those weaknesses, not "yes men" who only said what they thought the boss wanted to hear.

George C. Marshall did not seek fame; it came as a result of his hard work and good character. He never became wealthy, but he did not care. Rich people were honored to work for him. The U.S. Post Office has issued two stamps in his honor; there is a training center and a bridge named for him in Germany, a museum in Holland, the Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama, several public schools in the United States, and the George C. Marshall Foundation in Lexington, Virginia. This is not too bad an outcome for a "late bloomer."

Larry I. Bland, editor, *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall*

George C. Marshall Sr.
Born 1845

Laura Bradford Marshall
Born 1846

Marie Louise
Born 1876

Stuart Bradford
Born 1875

George Catlett
Born 1880

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AMERICA'S HERO TO THE WORLD

GEORGE C. MARSHALL

Chapter 1

The Uniontown Years — A Small-Town Boyhood

1880-1897

The boy ran down Main Street with a purpose in mind. He was going to try it. The first long distance telephone connections, from his hometown to faraway cities, were being made that day from the central telephone office. He was going to talk to someone he could not see and did not know more than 100 miles away. The boy was George Marshall, and the year was 1893.

Years later, General George C. Marshall recalled, "I remember the first exhibition of the long-distance telephone when they had about twenty phones on one board [switchboard]. You could come in and talk to Chicago or wherever you elected. I, of course, talked to Chicago, which was quite an event in my mind. I must have been about 13 or 14 at the time."

The telephone was only one of many American lifestyle changes in the late 1800s. Others, such as the use of electric power and the availability of the telegraph and streetcars, also entered the daily life of George Marshall when he was a boy. Born fifteen years after the Civil War, George Marshall grew up in an active period of economic, political, and social change, not only for the United States but for the world as well. His chosen profession provided him with opportunities to be a key player in many events of 20th century American history, including three wars. As an adult, George Marshall selflessly answered his country's call many times and in many ways.

George Catlett Marshall Jr. was born in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, on New Year's Eve, the last day of 1880. He was the youngest child of George and Laura Bradford Marshall. When he was born, his brother, Stuart Bradford, was six years old, and his sister, Marie Louise, was five.

Uniontown had about 3,000 people, and was over a 100 years old when George was born. Throughout George's growing-up years, the Marshall family rented a two-story brick house at the end of West Main Street. At that time, Main Street in Uniontown was part of the National Road. It was the first and only road built directly by the federal government, begun around 1810 and completed in 1838. By 1880, when George Marshall was born, the National Road was the east-west connection for the railroads and ports of eastern Pennsylvania and Maryland.

It is likely that George's father explained to him the importance of this road, for Mr. Marshall was a lover of history. The Pennsylvania countryside surrounding Uniontown was an area filled with history. He enjoyed telling his son stories of the past and helping him see the connections their region had in the development of America. For example, not far from Uniontown is a historic landmark, General Braddock's grave. In 1755, General Edward Braddock and his British troops were assisting George Washington and the colonial army in fighting the French and Indian War, when Braddock was killed in battle. Braddock's soldiers buried him in the middle of the trail and rode over his grave, mashing down the dirt, so their enemies would not disturb his body. Later, when the National Road was being built, human remains were found in the area and identified as those of General Braddock. He was reburied in a proper gravesite enclosed by a fence. The area near the fence that surrounds Braddock's grave was a popular gathering and courting spot for the Uniontown teenagers of the late 1800s, including George Marshall.

George's father related other tales of the Revolutionary War and local history as he and his son walked in the fields and woods while hunting birds or fishing in the streams. Because of his father's influence, George developed a love of history that lasted throughout his life, and two of his lifelong hobbies were hunting and fishing.

Mr. Marshall wanted George to learn not only American history but his family history as well. George's parents were successful, middle-class people, and especially proud of their Virginia heritage. Some of the ancestors of both the Marshall and Bradford families lived in Virginia in the 1700s. Several of them had moved their families westward from Virginia, before the Civil War, and settled in Kentucky, where both of George's parents were born. Virginia was still an important part of their past, and in later years George made his home in Virginia.

One early Virginia family connection was to John Marshall, the famous chief justice of the Supreme Court. Mr. Marshall was quite proud of being distantly related to him. Young George was often annoyed by his father's boasting of his grandfather's first cousin, who served from 1801 to 1835 as chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. Many years later, George Marshall said, "I thought the continued harping on the name of John Marshall was kind of a poor business. It was about time for someone else to swim for the family."

George's father had several other lawyers and a few ministers in the family. His mother had doctors in her family, including her father. Yet young George was not as impressed with the Marshall genealogy as his parents were, until one day, while reading the family history book, he discovered a short entry claiming, but not proving, that a Marshall daughter had married Blackbeard the pirate. George was delighted to think he had a pirate ancestor, and he took the book around town to show his friends. After all, his father was descended from Blackbeard. His father was not delighted with George's find. Mr. Marshall was a very social-minded, respectable gentleman, an avid churchgoer, an active Democrat, and a fairly successful businessman in Uniontown. He did not appreciate being connected with Blackbeard. General Marshall later related that his father was embarrassed and

"perfectly furious" when friends told him of the interesting family news that was being spread around town.

George Marshall was a normal, ordinary boy with the nickname of Flicker, perhaps given to him for his light, reddish-colored hair, or maybe because he ran wherever he went. His vivid blue eyes missed very little of what went on around him. He had a protected family life, a dislike for school, a keen sense of humor, and plenty of curiosity and imagination. Keeping his father pleased and happy with him was just about his biggest problem.

If George got into trouble, which he often did, he had to face the music and take his punishment. Mr. Marshall was quite strict with his youngest son and must have believed in the Biblical saying "Spare the rod and spoil the child," because he gave George lickings or switchings for his misbehavior. George and his buddies had plenty of room to play outside in the fields and the woods, or in and around the town. If they were not in school, or doing their chores at home, they enjoyed hanging around the general store, the barber shop, or the blacksmith's shop, talking or listening to the men tell stories. Once, George skipped school and went to one of his favorite places, the blacksmith shop. His sister found him there and told their father. George got a licking that day, for sure! General Marshall said the last licking he remembered his father giving him came when he tried to spray his sister with the garden hose because she was teasing him. He accidentally soaked his mother instead!

George was lucky that his mother was patient, and not as strict as his father, and had a good sense of humor. She often enjoyed watching or listening to the accounts of George's adventures and escapades. He told her of his fun times as well as his troubles, and sometimes neither he nor his mother informed his father. If anyone spoiled George when he was a boy, his mother did. In telling of his younger days, George Marshall said, "She never corrected me, because if I told her, I realized it was wrong and there was no use telling me again it was wrong."

George's best boyhood friend, Andy Thompson, lived across the street in a brick house just like his. Because George and Andy wanted to have spending money, the boys tried running several small businesses. They charged a fee of a few pennies (which were worth much more then) for their valuable wares or service. They set up a lemonade-like stand where they sold licorice water, made from powdered licorice, sugar, and water. They held circus performances with their pets as the wild animals, and ran a restaurant that sold baked sweet potatoes and apples. George and Andy opened a bar in the Marshall basement and sold his father's fermented root beer, until he caught them.

One rather serious business venture for George and Andy came about after they went with their mothers to visit a greenhouse on the edge of Uniontown. George and Andy decided they, too, could earn money growing plants. The local carriage maker gave them some green paint, and they painted, as high as they could reach, an old shed in the Marshalls' backyard. The result was their "greenhouse." The boys then collected tin cans, painted them green, filled them with rich black soil from the barnyard, and planted weeds in them. They made a white flag, printed

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their names on it, and were open for business. The girls from school were some of their best customers, for they were willing to pay several pennies for the healthy greenery. Since the first sales went well, George and Andy planted tiny blue wildflowers, called forget-me-nots, in strawberry boxes painted green with a black stripe around them, with moss tucked in around the edges. They told the girls the flowers were "special and rare," not at all easy to find. The boxes were so attractive that the girls happily bought them, paying even more pennies than for the tin-can plants. Later, their class went on a spring outing into the woods near the school. The girls discovered a hole in the middle of a forget-me-not patch, and knew exactly where George and Andy had found their "special and rare" blue flowers. Sadly, the Marshall and Thompson florist business then wilted and died.

Another Marshall and Thompson enterprise, the ferryboat business, brought George trouble once again. The boat was homemade and flat-bottomed with a plug in it for draining unwanted water. George and Andy used their ferry for crossing the small creek called Coal Lick Run that ran near the Marshalls' house. Andy was the navigator and wielded the pole to push the boat. George, as the conductor, put his cap on backwards and sold tickets, which he had printed on a newfangled toy typewriter. Once more, the neighborhood girls were the customers. They paid pennies for tickets to ride the ferry as a shortcut along their way to school.

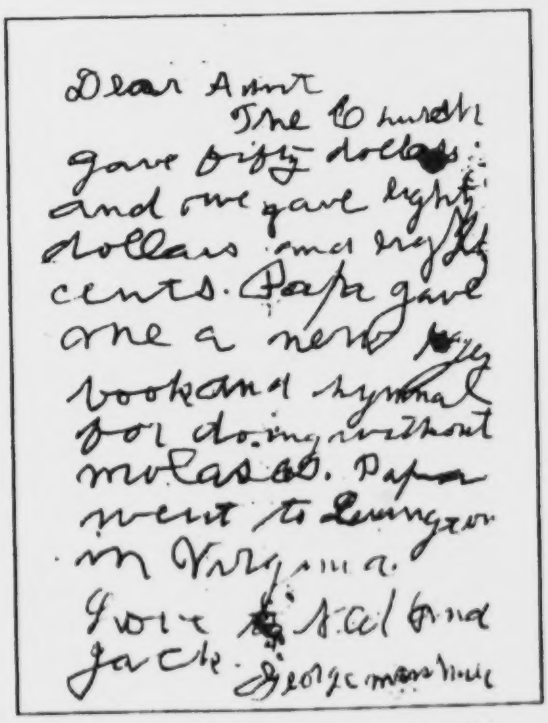
One day the girls refused to give up their tickets to the conductor. Andy began to laugh at George, and the girls began to giggle. If there was one thing George Marshall hated, it was to be laughed at, especially by Andy, and girls. George was in a tight spot and had to make a quick decision. He looked down at the floor of the boat and knew what to do. He pulled the cork, up shot the water, and down went the boat. Since the creek was not very deep, no one was hurt, but everybody's shoes and clothes were muddy and wet. The girls blamed George for what happened, and ran to tell their parents. Of course, George's father heard about it. The conductor took a licking, and the ferry business went under.

George's early business experiences did not foretell his future as a highly successful adult, nor did his school days. During his first school years, George attended a private school where he was allowed to get by without learning much. But he enjoyed recess. He lined up the children, gave them sticks to carry on their shoulders, and marched them around the school yard as soldiers. He was a leader on the playground, if not in his studies.

At about age nine, George's parents sent him to the public school, where it was discovered, much to his father's displeasure, that he was far behind others of his age in reading and math. He stumbled in oral reading and struggled with basic arithmetic, and his spelling skills and handwriting were terrible.

The ferryboat business goes under.

Original Sketch by Robert Tharp



Dear Aunt
The Church
gave fifty dollars
and one gave eight
dollars and eight
cents. Papa gave
one a new
book and hymnal
for doing without
molasses. Papa
went to Lexington
in Virginia.
From Neal and
Jack. George Washington

Young George's handwriting was terrible.

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George was not a good student, and he did not care for school. Since he disliked any activity that he did not do well, only history, his favorite subject, came easily for him. In admitting to being a less than perfect student, General Marshall said, "I had a very painful time in public school, and I was ashamed to admit my ignorance . . . so many in the room knew these (math) problems—so quickly and so much better than I did . . . except in something like history. If it was history, that was all right; I could star in history."

Despite his unhappy school experiences, George became an avid reader. Mr. Marshall enjoyed reading aloud to the family at night from the popular novels of the time, such as James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*. This habit encouraged George as a reader. He devoured popular, fast-paced adventure stories, mysteries, and, of course, history books. As an adult, George C. Marshall continued to enjoy reading. Mysteries and westerns were among his favorites. He also was known to read biographies, world and national history, plus military history for relaxation and pleasure. During World War II, he scanned nine newspapers every day for war news.

School may not have been George Marshall's favorite boyhood place or activity, but Uniontown was home for his first 20 years. He remembered with affection those boyhood experiences and had fond memories of his hometown, though he never returned there to live. He said, "In this life of Uniontown, I saw what you might call the end of an era because it was a very simple life and a very charming life and it had a long history behind it."

In the 1890s, as George grew into his teen-age years, many people anticipated the arrival of a new century. The Industrial Revolution in the United States had generated new jobs, and inventors were creating new techniques, machines, and products at a rapid pace. America was on the move, looking outward to develop new markets, influence, and power. Times were changing, and so was the boy, Flicker Marshall. It was time to move along.

Chapter 2

VMI Years — First-Class Yankee

1897-1901

When it was time for George C. Marshall to go to college, he told his parents he wanted to attend Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Virginia. It would have been less expensive for the family if George could have gone to the United States Military Academy at West Point. West Point was free, but VMI cost about $400 a year, which was a lot of money in those days. George Marshall did not apply to West Point. For one thing his grades were too low, because he had not been a good student. Second, as a youngster he had injured his right elbow. It never healed properly and he could not straighten his arm completely. That caused him trouble at times and might have kept him from passing the West Point physical fitness test. Finally, and most importantly, a boy needed to be appointed by a U.S. senator from his state if he wanted to be admitted to West Point. His father was a staunch Democrat, and both Pennsylvania senators were Republicans, so it was very unlikely that George C. Marshall Jr. would be appointed.

It was a conversation between Stuart and his mother that would set George's course for VMI. Stuart had gone to VMI when George was nine years old. He had done well academically, majored in chemistry, and returned to Pennsylvania to work as a chemist. Stuart was concerned when he heard George talking about attending VMI, and he pleaded with their mother not to let George go there. Stuart thought that George would embarrass the family with failing grades. Marshall related the story to his official biographer, Forrest C. Pogue, this way: "When I was begging to go to VMI, I overheard Stuart talking to my mother; he was trying to persuade her not to let me go because he thought I would disgrace the family name. Well, that made more impression on me than all instructors, parental pressure, or anything else. I decided right then and there that I was going to 'wipe his eye.'" He would show Stuart a thing or two! Knowing how his brother felt made George more determined to succeed.

To get into VMI, there was no entrance test to pass, except the one required by Superintendent Scott Shipp. Shipp did not care as much about the academic ability of a cadet as about the young man's family background. George passed that test with flying colors. He had a built-in Virginia heritage, through John Marshall. His father was a solid citizen, his brother was an alumnus, and there were seven other Marshalls on the campus during his four years. George was accepted at VMI.

On September 11, 1897, George Marshall went by train to Lexington, Virginia. Arriving in the late afternoon, he walked alone across town, past Washington and Lee University, to Virginia Military Institute. He brought along a note from his father to Superintendent Shipp, which read: "I send you my youngest and last. He is bright and full of life, and I believe he will get along very well." Marshall's first impressions of VMI were quite strong, even in memory years later. General

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Marshall said, "I will never forget walking down the long approach avenue to the barracks and hearing the bugle sound the assembly for dress parade and seeing the adjutant and the sergeant major strut out to form the line on which the battalion would form. I thought they were very wonderful looking figures."

The total VMI enrollment for the 1897-98 school year was only 222. Marshall was the last of the 122 freshmen to arrive. Having been ill with typhoid fever during the past summer, a disease he caught from swimming in polluted pond water, he arrived 10 days after school started. George Marshall was 16, tall, skinny, and shy. He was quiet, somewhat aloof, and weakened by his recent illness. From the first, he was behind in learning how to drill and march, and he was embarrassed if anyone spoke to him. Besides, he had a Yankee accent, with a Pittsburgh twang to it.

These traits brought George Marshall unwanted attention from the upperclassmen, in the form of hazing. Hazing was an extreme kind of teasing, or harassment, and was used by the upperclassmen in initiating the freshmen. At VMI, hazing was a tradition for many years, though the administration discouraged unusual or overly severe treatment. Traditionally, to separate the classes at VMI, the seniors were known as Firsts, the juniors were Seconds, the sophomores were Thirds, and the freshmen, Fourths. The freshmen were also called Rats because they were considered "the lowest form of life on earth" during their first year. Rats were fully initiated, mostly by the Thirds, and the class had to earn its way out of the Rat Line before the freshmen could be considered *real* cadets. Strong tradition at VMI keeps those class rules in place today, even though the hazing is less severe.

Because George Marshall arrived later than the others, and because space was tight, he was assigned to a room on the same floor as the Thirds. His room assignment not only made Marshall more noticeable to the Thirds than other Rats, but also made him more handy to the Thirds. They could get to him more often.

An often-told story about George Marshall and VMI hazing goes like this: Not long after he arrived, several Thirds came to Room 88 where George and his roommates lived. They wedged a bare bayonet firmly between the floorboards, point up, and ordered George to squat over it. Marshall followed orders. He managed to hold a squat for about 20 minutes, without complaint, and then, he slipped! His injury wasn't serious, but it could have been. He had a good-sized gash in his buttock which kept him from marching for about four days. He went to the VMI doctor for treatment of the cut, but did not name the cadets who had caused his "accident." If he had told, most likely the Thirds would have been punished.

One might wonder why he refused to tell, since some Rats might quickly have pointed a finger at the guilty ones. His reasons may have had something to do with the "VMI Spirit" of being part of the group, of keeping the trust, and therefore not giving in even when the treatment was harsh and degrading. Perhaps with Marshall it became a matter of honor, of loyalty to the system, not to tell. Marshall gained a certain respect from his peers by not telling, and perhaps his hazing load was lightened. When asked about his first year at VMI, General Marshall explained, "The routine of cadet life I became accustomed to and accepted. I think I

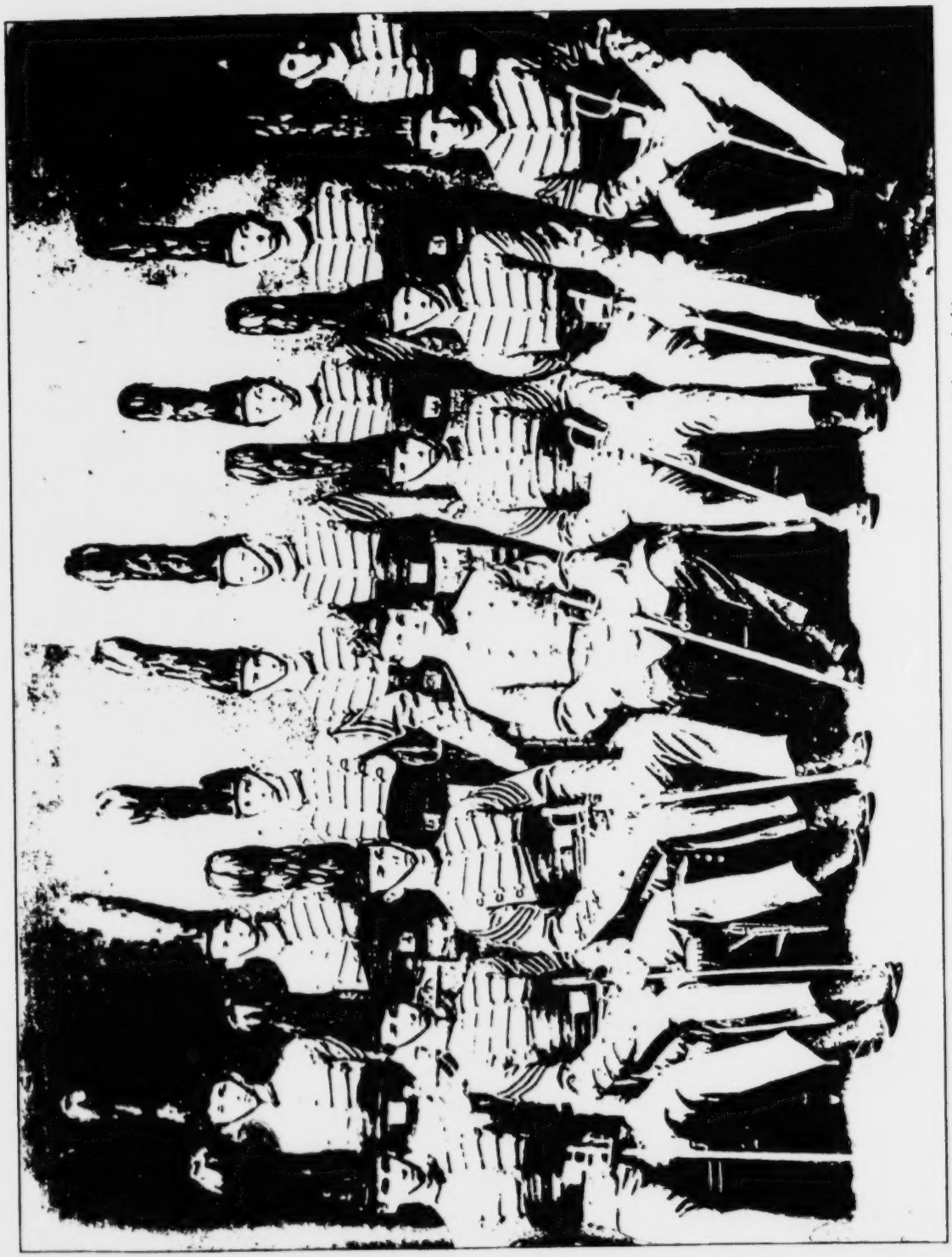
was a little bit more philosophical about this thing than a good many boys. It was part of the business, and the only thing to do was accept it as best you could and as easily as you could."

Adjustment to college academic life was more difficult. The first year of college studies for George Marshall included English, French, mathematics, and drawing. He struggled with his subjects as a freshman, maybe because he got off to a late start. The young cadet improved some during the next three years, especially in English, but mathematics and science were his worst subjects. For the most part, he had average grades. His conduct report was a different matter. He was one of six cadets in his class to graduate with no demerits on his record. Learning rules and following orders was a part of the military life that came easily to him.

In sharp contrast to his academic grades, Cadet Marshall excelled in military tactics. He seemed to have a talent for the military arts, taking to its routine like a duck to water. Each year at VMI he was the top military student in his class. In his second year, he was first corporal; the third year brought him to first sergeant; and, for his senior year, he was named first captain of cadets, the highest cadet rank at VMI. He wore the stripes of his rank on his coat sleeve with pride, especially when he went home to Uniontown. By fall of 1900, first captain of cadets, George Marshall was beginning his senior year. In later years, Marshall credited his cadet officer responsibilities with helping him to develop the ability to see the complete problem when it was presented, and to make accurate and firm decisions. Being an officer forced him to discipline himself first, and then others.

One of his main responsibilities during his senior year was monitoring the cadet corps through their meals, which he said was "the principal time that you had to exercise some talent at leadership." As first captain, he noted, "I was responsible for the entire corps every meal all through the year. And if I do say it, with hardly a loud laugh." Mealtime was a serious affair at VMI. A cadet did not have time to spare when it came to eating, but the boys were usually allowed to socialize quietly while they ate. Once, when he was in charge as first captain, Marshall had a situation that called for a quick and firm decision. The cadets had just started to eat dessert, a rare treat of fresh strawberries, when they decided to challenge Marshall's authority.

There had been a recent case at West Point that had become so serious it led to a congressional investigation. The West Point corps had given complete silence to a tactical officer, which was considered *worse* than being too loud and boisterous. Complete silence was a means of ridiculing or mocking the official authority, or the one in charge. In trying the same type of behavior at VMI, the corps was putting their leader to the test, and making fun of Marshall. They tried to make him angry, to see what he would do. As Marshall later recounted the incident, "There was a complete silence while they were eating and that attracted some fellow's attention, so he shushed the rest and they all settled down to a complete silence to see what I was going to do . . . . I merely got up, and called them to attention, and marched them out of the mess hall when the strawberries were only about a third eaten."



VMI Cadet Staff 1901 (George C. Marshall, front row, third from left)

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Without losing his temper, George Marshall regained control, punished the guilty, and ended the incident without any further reproaches. He exhibited that same controlled decisiveness time and again throughout his career as an officer. Of his experiences at VMI, Marshall would say, "What I learned at VMI was self-control and discipline, so that it was ground in. I learned also the problems of managing men. If I had been a first class private . . . I would have been very different about matters and made it a practice . . . to be as slack as I could be . . . . But I, in my job of first captain, had to exercise authority all the time, and I had to do it in such a way that it didn't create resentment."

George Marshall was admired and accepted by other cadets because he was friendly, fair, and honest in his dealings with others. Sometimes when he was the officer of the day (OD), he had to report a fellow cadet, even a friend, for being late to formation, having something amiss with his uniform, or not meeting VMI room standards. If reported by an OD, a cadet received demerits as punishment. They seemed to understand that Marshall was only doing his duty, following orders, and not acting against them personally. Perhaps part of their acceptance came from knowing that Marshall practiced what he preached. If there had been a course in following orders, George would have had at least one A on his report card. He had no demerits on his record, and, at VMI, having no demerits *is* a record.

George Marshall enjoyed some leisure time once in a while at VMI. He liked to walk uptown to window shop or to spend some of his $5 monthly allowance at a popular little store that favored cadets. Because he enjoyed outdoor activities and competition, he tried out for the football team in his junior year. He made the team, but the season was canceled after the first game. VMI was closed for six weeks during the fall of 1899 due to a typhoid fever epidemic. Cadet Marshall tried again the next year, and made it. As a First (a senior), he played left tackle on the team of 1900. VMI won Southern Conference honors that year in football, and he enjoyed a fine season, even getting his name in the newspaper sports column a time or two. Playing football was a real pleasure because he knew how to tackle, could make quick decisions, and was a fast runner. George Marshall enjoyed doing what he could do well.

On his way back from football practice one day, as he walked past a house near the Limit Gates, he heard someone playing a piano. For several days afterward, he walked by the house and listened to the beautiful music. It wasn't long before he met, and soon fell in love with, the young woman who was playing that music, Elizabeth "Lily" Carter Coles. Lily was five years older than George, and had been courted by several cadets, including George's brother, Stuart. For both George and Lily, the attraction was immediate. It was said in Lexington that when Lily first met the tall, handsome first captain, she said, "I'm going to marry him."

Lily was a beautiful woman, with auburn hair and brown eyes, and she was a flirt. George C. Marshall found her to be bright, beautiful, spirited, and altogether charming. He fell in love, head over heels. George took terrific chances to see Lily. He risked his VMI career for her. At night, after "lights out" he would often "run the block" (sneak out of the barracks) to go see Lily.

VMI football team, 1900: George Marshall is in the second row, second from the right.

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His roommates helped him get by with such a dangerous trick by covering for him as he left and returned. Had he been caught, even though he was the first captain, he would surely have been demoted, probably expelled. It would have ended his successful military career at VMI and dashed his hopes of another one in the United States Army. Luckily, he was not caught. His main comment on the subject was, "I was very much in love." By June 1901, George and Lily were informally engaged to be married. At that time, a young man needed a means of supporting a wife before getting married. George needed a job!

George Marshall wanted to become a soldier, but he did not want to enlist as a private. He wanted to be a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army. After the Spanish American War, the War Department decided to increase the size of the army, so in 1901 there were openings for more lieutenants than could be filled by West Point graduates. Still, there was a problem. He could become a second lieutenant only if he could take, and pass the examinations given to civilians by the War Department. To take the examinations, he not only needed a letter of authorization from the War Department, he had to be selected.

His parents were not in favor of George's entering the military as a career. In those days, the military did not provide a high social status or pay well. Both were important to the elder Mr. Marshall. He asked the VMI superintendent if he thought George would make a good soldier. The letter of recommendation written by Superintendent Shipp to President William McKinley on January 13, 1901, surely gave Mr. Marshall his answer: "I assert with absolute confidence that if commissioned in the army, young Marshall will in all respects, soon take his stand much above the average West Point graduate." When Mr. Marshall learned that General Shipp thought George would do well if he went into the Army, he agreed to do what he could to help him secure a chance to take the examinations. He wrote letters to some of his influential political and business friends in Washington, D.C., asking them to write letters of introduction for his son. But it meant that George Marshall alone had to visit the capital city to collect the letters.

In April of 1901, George visited his father's friends, but he still doubted he had a chance of being selected for the testing, unless someone with absolute influence recommended him. So, on his own, he went to the White House to see President William McKinley, a Republican. General Marshall told it this way to Forrest C. Pogue: "I had no appointment of any kind. I sat there and watched the people, some 10 or 15, go in by appointment, stay 10 minutes, and be excused." When the last scheduled group went into the President's office, George Marshall followed, tagging along as if he was with them. They had their say and when they left, he was left to face the president of the United States, all by himself. "Mr. McKinley, in a very nice way, asked what I wanted, and I stated my case," Marshall said.

Maybe President McKinley had nothing to do with George Marshall's being allowed to take the examinations, perhaps the letters did the trick. But something worked, because George Marshall's name appeared on the selection list when it was published in the Lexington newspaper on June 17, 1901, 10 days before his graduation.

George Marshall did not do as well as his brother had in his studies at VMI, but he did not disgrace the family. After a shaky academic start in his first year, he passed all of his courses and finished VMI in the middle range of his class. In his first year he was number 18 in a class of 82, and placed 15th among 33 seniors. He graduated in 5th place out of 18 in his major field of civil engineering. At that time, VMI awarded academic degrees only to the top 6 seniors, and all the others received a diploma of completion. George Marshall received his diploma on June 26, 1901.

There was little time to savor his success, for his next objective was a commission in the U.S. Army. The War Department examinations were scheduled for September of that year in Governor's Island, New York. Good luck, George C. Marshall.

George C. Marshall, VMI graduate, 1901

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The Wedding Party, February 11, 1902,
From left to right: Marie, Lily, George, Stuart, Mrs. Marshall, Mr. Marshall, Mrs. Coles

Chapter 3

A Young Officer — From the Philippines to the Great War

1902-1916

While waiting to take the examinations for his army commission, George C. Marshall took a job that fall of 1901, as the commandant and teacher of cadets at the Danville Military Institute in Danville,Virginia. If he did not pass the exams and receive a commission, at least he would have a job. DMI was a private prep school with an enrollment of about 90 boys of elementary and high school age. When school began, Marshall put on his DMI uniform and, as Major Marshall, taught English, spelling, arithmetic, and algebra. He had never done well in these subjects, but he also taught history, which he enjoyed, and battalion drills and proper marching techniques, which he understood completely.

Milton Herman, a former student who attended DMI in 1901, said years later, "Never was any teacher so admired as he was by those under his instruction . . . . He showed them the traits that marked his career throughout; reserve, keen attention to duties, and strict adherence to principles . . . . His reserve hid a warm heart for he always found time during his World War II service in Washington to chat with any old DMI cadet who came to see him, and to inquire about others of his time there."

In December, Marshall learned that he had passed the examinations and that he would receive his long-awaited commission. He knew that army rules would not allow him to receive it until he turned 21, or to marry Lily until after he was commissioned. However, he resigned his position at DMI and went to Lexington to spend Christmas with Lily and her mother. Finally, they could at least plan for a wedding.

On February 2, 1902, George C. Marshall was commissioned a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army, in Uniontown, Pennsylvania. His orders arrived 5 days later, making everything official, and he had 10 days before reporting for duty. So, off he went to Lexington to be married. George Catlett Marshall Jr. and Elizabeth "Lily" Carter Coles were wed on February 11, 1902, at the bride's home. George's family came to Lexington for the wedding and so did his boyhood friend, Andy Thompson.

The Marshalls had little time together because he had to be at Fort Myer, Virginia, on February 13. When the registration officer learned that Marshall had just been married, he allowed him an extra 10 days, which George and Lily enjoyed in Washington, D.C. Lieutenant Marshall was then assigned to the Army's 30th Infantry Division, and he headed for the Philippine Islands. After only a little more than a week of married life, the newlywed Marshalls were separated for almost two years, because wives of junior officers were not allowed to accompany their husbands to the Philippines. Lily could not have made the trip anyway, since she suffered from a weak heart—a chronic condition that would not permit physical

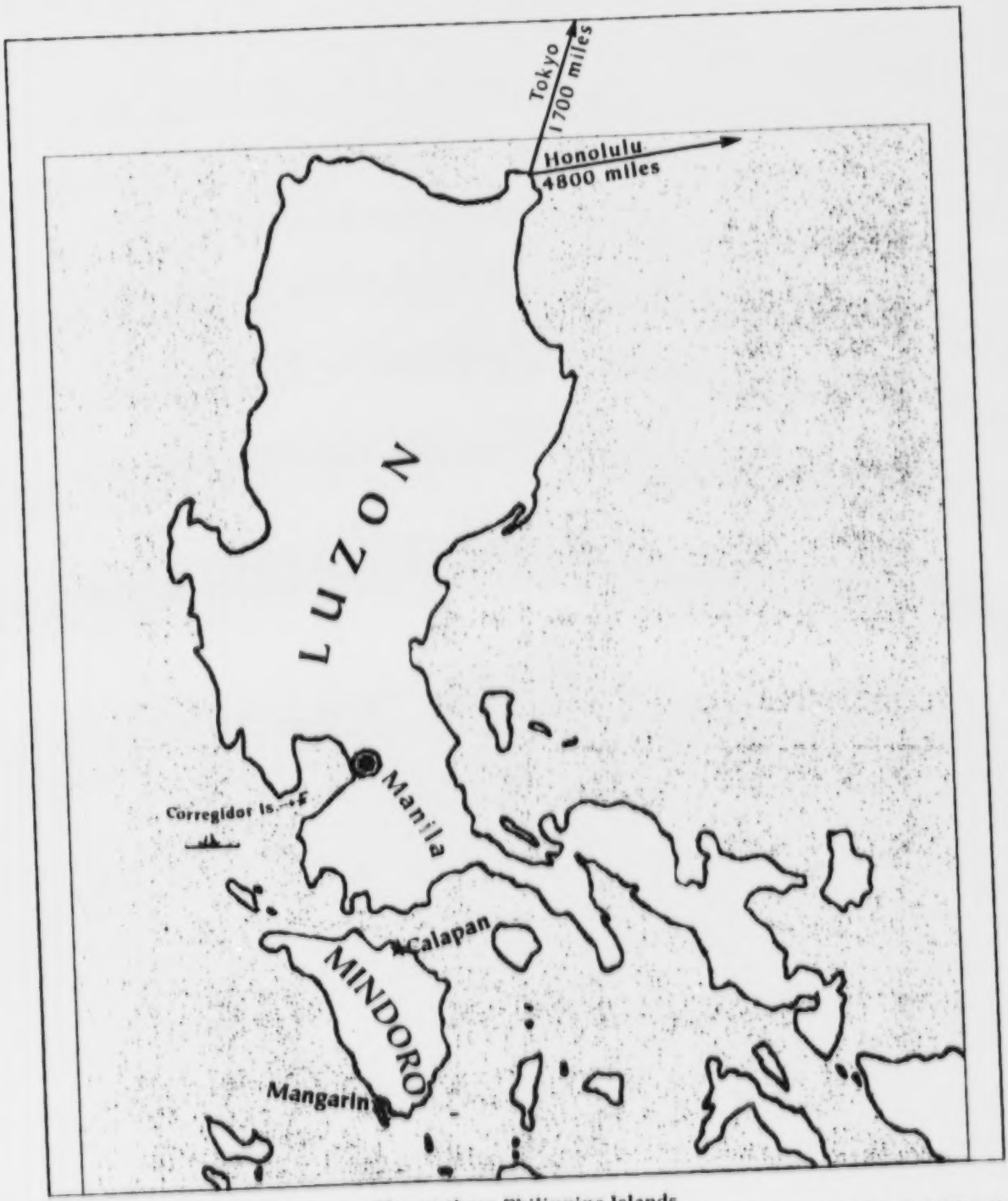
strain or vigorous activity. George went by train to San Francisco, and by ship to the Philippines, traveling halfway around the world from Uniontown, VMI, and his wife. Lily went back to Lexington and stayed with her mother.

Arriving on the Philippine island of Mindoro, Lieutenant Marshall joined Company G of the 30th Infantry Regiment. The Spanish American War had officially ended four years earlier, but rebels, in opposition to the U.S. takeover of the islands, had continued to fight for several years. The leader of the guerrillas, Emilio Aquinaldo, had been captured, and by spring of 1902 most of the fighting was over. Company G headquarters was in Mangarin, on Mindoro, but Marshall was assigned to a detachment of the company at Calapan, the capital of Mindoro. Calapan was hardly more than a group of native huts surrounded by jungle. George C. Marshall did not see combat, but he did see trouble.

A cholera epidemic was raging in the Philippines when Marshall arrived. Cholera is a deadly disease spread through unsafe water, raw or unclean food, and dirty hands or utensils. It dehydrates the body and, in that primitive island setting, was usually fatal. That year the illness took more than 100,000 Filipino lives.[1] Yet no American soldiers died at Calapan on Mindoro, in part because of George C. Marshall. A quarantine that restricted Company G's contact with the people of the island, along with the discipline of extreme cleanliness that Lieutenant Marshall helped to impose on the men, was effective. The soldiers were confined to quarters, everything they ate or drank was boiled, hands were scrubbed, mess kits were scoured and rinsed, and no shortcuts in sanitation were allowed. The good health of the men remained, but not their good tempers. They grew tired of confinement, the tedium of constant cleaning, the monotony of routine, and especially of always being together. They needed a break.

Close to July 4, 1902, the quarantine was lifted and the officers in charge declared it was time for a celebration. The commanding officer decided they should have a field day and planned a whole range of events. Then he made Lieutenant Marshall responsible for carrying through on organizing and running the day's activities. The men of the garrison were not in a celebrating mood. The morale of the unit was low, and most of the older officers doubted that strenuous activity in the tropical heat would do much to raise spirits. Nevertheless, everyone was under orders to attend the festivities whether they wanted to or not. Marshall had an idea. He went from officer to officer and collected money to offer as prizes in the athletic events. At first, the soldiers did not know about the prize money. They were not keen on athletic competitions or games, and when the100-yard dash was called, only three men showed up for the race.

General Marshall explained, "They ran the 100-yard dash. I gave the number one man $20, the number two man $15, and the number three man $10. Well, as a soldier's pay was only $13 a month, those were huge prizes." That started the ball rolling for the rest of the field day. When the second race was announced, there were so many runners, they could not all compete. Their interest aroused, soldiers participated in all sorts of races and events. Spirits rose considerably as the competition for prizes increased.



The northern Philippine Islands
(map designed by Larry I. Bland)
George C. Marshall Museum and Library

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U.S. patrol, Manila, Philippine Islands, 1902

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The men Lieutenant Marshall commanded were enlisted men. Some came from very rough backgrounds and had not been trained for the military. They were difficult at times. Marshall had a strong temper, and he worked hard to control it. He knew from past experience that if he gave respect to others, he would receive it inkind. His approach was never to bully or humiliate his men. Once he found one of his officers reprimanding an enlisted man in very strong terms. He called the man aside and reminded him that the lower-ranking soldier "is an American citizen, just like you are." Marshall commanded his company with a combination of firmness, understanding, compassion, and diplomacy—all qualities that would become his trademark.

In remembering an incident that occurred during his first year as a lieutenant, he told this story: He had some of his men out on a patrol one day, in an area just outside of Mangarin, and he led the men through a barrio (small village) to avoid a swamp. The soldiers saw some of the people trying to help a pony whose hip had been half-bitten off by a crocodile. As he said, "They were just sewing him up without any regard to the pony's feelings, and that horrified the men." Just after they passed by the pony, Marshall took the men through a deep stream. As he told it, "We went into this stream single file. I had seven men. They were behind me and holding their rifles and the amunition belts up, to keep them clear of the water. When we got about two-thirds of the way across, there was a splash up above us (upstream) and some fellow yelled 'crocodile.' In about a second they all plunged ahead. They ran over me. I was ground right down to the bottom. Their feet went up my back and over me and up the other side. I finally came to the surface pretty well done up."

George Marshall did some fast thinking. The men had not intended to run over him or to hurt him, but in their panic, they did. He made his decision. "I got to the surface . . . went up the steep bank where the seven men were standing . . . looking very guilty and very unsure of themselves . . . . I took my position in front of them, wet and covered with mud, and fell them in [called them to attention] very formally. I then gave them `right shoulder arms,' faced them to the right, and marched them down into the stream and clear to the other side. As they reached the other bank, I gave them 'to the rear, march.' They came back up out of the crocodile stream. Then I halted them, faced them toward me, inspected their guns, and . . . gave them `fall out.' Then we started our excursion up into the mountains . . . . They never referred to it. I never referred to it . . . . I had done what I think was just about right." George C. Marshall decided quickly and applied discipline that restored his right of command, as well as the confidence of his men.

Once back in the States, in 1903, and after a short leave to visit Lily in Lexington, Marshall's next assignment was at Fort Reno, an army post west of Oklahoma City in Cheyenne Indian country. The Oklahoma Territory was almost as remote and primitive as the Philippines. While on a mapping expedition, he made use of his VMI civil engineering degree, mapping and surveying a huge region of nearby Texas.

A Young Officer

In 1906, George was offered a chance to attend the Infantry and Cavalry School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and he accepted. His timing was perfect, because just after he was admitted, the army rules changed so that an officer had to be a captain or higher to enter the staff college. Marshall was only a second lieutenant at the time. Had he not gone to Leavenworth, he would have missed out on several important years of military training that would change the direction of his career.

George C. Marshall realized he would have a rough path to follow in the first year of his new schooling. He knew that only the top half of the class would be able to return for the second year. There were 53 other officers in the class, all older, more experienced, and better prepared academically than he was. Marshall overheard two classmates discussing the names of those most likely to succeed and be kept on for the second year. Several names were agreed upon, but his name was not one of those mentioned. That was all it took. George C. Marshall decided he would be among the ones to stay. His brother had thought George would disgrace the Marshall family name with his poor grades in college, but George had proved his brother wrong and had not failed. He would do it again by proving those officers wrong.

In assessing the value of this experience at Fort Leavenworth, Marshall later said, "I finally got into the habit of study, which I never really had before. I revived what little I had carried with me out of college and I became pretty automatic at the business . . . it was the hardest work I ever did in my life." Much of the work and studying was memorizing, committing facts and formulas to memory, recalling and applying what he had learned in classroom recitations. Competition for grades was fierce, and their marks were ranked to hundredths of a percentage point. Differences could be small but vital. One day Marshall scored 100 on a map exercise and his friend scored 95.17, yet his friend ranked 47th among the 54 students.

The intense focus on grades did not necessarily mean that real learning was taking place for everybody, but Marshall knew that high grades were important to his total career. He had the ability to apply his attention to his studies without distraction, and once Lily arrived at Fort Leavenworth, he used his wife's frail health as a reason for not going out or socializing at night. Their quiet lifestyle fit his needs well, because he used this opportunity to study. At the end of the first year, after all the grades and rankings were averaged, George C. Marshall was first in the class. He was number one, as he had intended to be. His hard work and perseverance had paid off, and he was scheduled to continue for the second year.

The second year at Fort Leavenworth (1907-1908) was much easier for Marshall, less of a grind, and more enjoyable. He didn't have to worry about his ranking in class, but that did not keep him from working hard. Nor did it keep him from finishing at the top of the class again. It seemed clear by the end of his second year that Marshall was becoming a good student. As he said later, "My reading . . . was pretty helpful, as was my study of past operations. I learned how to digest them . . . . My habits of thought were being trained. While . . . I learned little I could use . . . I learned how to learn . . . . I began to develop along more stable lines."

Lieutenant George C. Marshall, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1908

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A Young Officer

Following the two years of study at Fort Leavenworth, George C. Marshall was appointed to stay on for two more years as an instructor in the Army Service Schools and Staff College, teaching engineering and military arts. He was promoted to first lieutenant in March of 1907, and all the officers he instructed were captains or higher in rank.

In the summers between sessions at Fort Leavenworth, the best students were assigned to teach at National Guard summer camps. Some army officers felt this was not a reward and disliked associating with the National Guard, whose men were not professional soldiers. This was not the attitude of Lieutenant Marshall.

The National Guard evolved from the colonial militias that were organized in the days before the American Revolution. Today, each state in the Union has National Guard units. Most of them are under control of the states' governors, who use them as militias to maintain law and order in case of floods, riots, danger to the public's health, or other emergencies. National Guardsmen can also be federalized, or called into service by the president, in a national crisis such as war. This reserve force makes it possible for the United States to hold onto one of its fundamental principles of government: to keep the permanent standing army small while maintaining national preparedness. The regular army had the duty of training these men in summer camps across the states. They introduced the Guardsmen to new techniques, weapons, and procedures, so that these state units would be ready if needed.

George C. Marshall found that working with the National Guard suited him fine. The first summer, in 1907, his National Guard duty was for one week, but in the following years he received longer assignments. Between 1911 and the summer of 1913, Lieutenant Marshall worked in the summer camps of the New England area. He was in charge of planning and directing large, more complicated maneuvers of a kind not previously attempted by Guard and regular army units. They included troop movements that crossed state lines and involved multi-state forces. Furthermore, National Guard units were combined with regular army units, increasing the numbers of troops participating in these military operations. It was strenuous work, and Marshall took it seriously.

In these National Guard experiences, George C. Marshall sharpened his skills as a teacher of military tactics. He learned the value of well-planned maneuvers as a means of effective training. Later he was to use these experiences to prepare troops for military operations in World Wars I and II, when massive forces of men and materials were moved across combat zones covering hundreds of square miles.

George C. Marshall's second assignment to the Philippine Islands came in 1913. This time Lily went with him. Though this was his second trip, the problem was no longer Philippine insurrectionists but the increasing power and ambition of Imperial Japan. In just over 20 years, the Japanese had "in a series of . . . ruthless actions, defeated China and Russia, conquered Manchuria, and annexed Korea."[2] It didn't take much military expertise to imagine that the U.S.-dominated Philippines would be next on their list. Therefore, the American army's presence was being increased there, and the adequacy of U.S. forces would be tested through increased maneuvers.

Main Street of Manila, Philippine Islands, 1913

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Lieutenant Marshall had barely arrived in the Philippines when General J. Franklin Bell, one of the commanding generals of the Philippine troops, put him to work planning a practice invasion of Luzon to test out the army's defense systems against attack from the sea. General Bell had been impressed with Marshall's performance when he was at Fort Leavenworth, and he was keeping an eye on this promising officer.

When two sides were practicing maneuvers in the harbor at Manila, all participants were assigned to either the White Force (as attackers) or to the Brown Force (as defenders) for a mock invasion. Marshall was made the adjutant and acted as chief of staff of the White Force when the regular commanding officer became ill. Many other officers participating in the maneuvers outranked Lieutenant Marshall, so it was a most unusual situation. Marshall was placed in the command of nearly 5,000 men who had to be picked up by boat from different sections of the Philippine Islands and brought together at precisely the right time and place, in a specific way. It was a stressful and strenuous undertaking for Marshall, but the maneuver was performed brilliantly. After watching his command of troops during this second Philippine trip, General Bell said that he considered Marshall to be the "greatest potential wartime leader in the army."

Lieutenant Henry H. "Hap" Arnold once saw George C. Marshall lying on his back in a bamboo clump, glancing at a map and dictating precise field orders for the advance on Luzon. Arnold wrote home to his wife that he had just seen a future army chief of staff in action. His work was so impressive that General Hunter Liggett, then stationed in the Philippines, had Marshall made his aide-de-camp, or assistant. Later, back in the States, so did General Bell.

George C. Marshall performed his duties with skill, but his body suffered from the stress. He described his condition as "a tight, dry feeling," and an inability to relax. His doctors prescribed two weeks of rest in the hospital at Manila, and that was followed by an extended vacation with Lily. During the Philippine hot season, Lily usually went to Japan for several months at a time. Marshall joined her there in 1914 for a medical leave plus some regular leave. He used that time to regain his health and learn the art of relaxation, which it seems he never completely mastered.

But he did learn to slow down somewhat—not push himself so hard. While in Japan, Marshall took up horseback riding as a regular hobby, sometimes riding 30 or 40 miles a day. He also found time to take brisk walks for exercise. Lieutenant Marshall's biggest worries that summer were improving his health and wondering when some of his hard work would result in a promotion to captain. Little could he have imagined how events in Europe would shape his life in the years to come.

On June 28, 1914, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne was assassinated by a Serbian nationalist in Sarajevo, Bosnia. What was to become the Great War began that August with Austria-Hungary's invasion of the tiny Balkan nation of Serbia. Soon it had grown into a worldwide armed conflict, engaging the armies of the major nations of Europe.[3] It crushed forever the delicate balance of power that had held Europe together since the early 1800s.

A Young Officer

Though most Americans were horrified at the coming of the war, most thought it had little to do with them. They would be proven wrong.

Chapter 4

Duty with Pershing — Lessons from the Top

1916-1927

George C. Marshall came back to the States from the Philippine Islands in May 1916, and after 14½ years, Lieutenant Marshall became Captain Marshall. His promotion became official that August. He was assigned to the Presidio, an army post near San Francisco, California, as an aide-de-camp to General J. Franklin Bell. Bell needed Marshall to help with organizing the new citizen-training summer camps.

In June 1916, Congress had passed the National Defense Act. This law expanded the regular army, allowed the National Guard to be drafted into active service in case of war, and added an organized reserve corps. The Officer Reserve Corps was trained at various colleges and at summer camps. Older and professional men could go to the summer training camps, but they paid their own expenses.

Experienced instructors like Captain Marshall were needed to assist in giving six weeks of military training to the men. For the rest of the summer and for part of the next year, Marshall traveled from California to Utah inspecting and organizing the camps that General Bell established, as well as instructing new citizen-soldiers. After inspecting and making needed changes at one of these posts, Fort Douglas, Utah, he returned to California. The commander at Fort Douglas, Lieutenant Colonel Johnson Hagood, had high praise for the captain's work, noting, "This officer is well qualified to command a division, with the rank of major general, in time of war, and I would like very much to serve under his command."[4]

Meanwhile, there was a war going on in Europe. In the beginning stages of the conflict, Germany and Austria-Hungary made up the Central powers, later joined by Bulgaria and Turkey. Great Britain, France, Russia, Serbia and Belgium were the Allied powers, and would later gain the support of more than 25 other nations, including Japan, Italy, and eventually the United States.

At first, President Woodrow Wilson declared the United States "neutral," and asked Americans to remain so, "in fact as well as name." American farmers and industry owners gained early benefits from this neutrality, selling food and materials to both sides. Yet, most people strongly sympathized with the Allied powers, with the exception of Irish-Americans (traditionally anti-British) and some German-Americans. Even after the Germans sank the British passenger ship the *Lusitania*, taking 128 American lives, the United States was not willing to get involved in the European war. In the presidential campaign of 1916, Wilson steadfastly promoted our continued neutrality, and supporters coined the slogan, "He kept us out of war."

Five months after Wilson's election, the United States, in April 1917, entered the war on the side of the Allies. The factors that led to America's involvement were

many. Perhaps the strongest was Germany's decision to use unrestricted submarine warfare, resulting in at least 200 American deaths. When American merchant ships were threatened by this activity, the United States contended that our right to "freedom of the seas" had been violated. Despite our efforts to negotiate with the Germans, the possibility that the United States would continue in its neutral role diminished. Hostile feelings against the autocratic German government of Kaiser Wilhelm increased, along with a more sympathetic view of Great Britain, with whom we shared a common language, culture, and belief in democratic government.

When German submarines sank three American ships in March 1917, the people began asking for war. The next month, President Woodrow Wilson called for a special session of Congress, asking it to help make the world "safe for democracy." Congress agreed, and on April 6, 1917, the United States declared war against Germany. Unfortunately, even though the U.S. had committed to war, it had virtually no army. When Wilson decided to send General John J. Pershing and a U.S. Army division to Europe, the reality was that there was none to be had. Pershing would go to Europe to "show our flag" while the army scrambled to put together that first division, which would be made up mostly of draftees.

General William L. Sibert was chosen to serve under Pershing as commander of the First Division, made up of four infantry regiments. These troops would be the first of a 2-million-man force that would eventually serve in Europe. As General Sibert prepared to go to France, he remembered the excellent work Marshall had done in California. He asked General Bell to release Marshall to the First Division to become assistant chief of staff for training and operations. Because of illness, General Bell would not be going to Europe. The general knew that Marshall wanted an opportunity to be a combat field commander. An assignment in Europe would increase this possibility and also enhance Marshall's chances for promotion. He released Marshall to General Sibert's command. George C. Marshall was delighted.

Marshall's assignment from General Sibert was to assist in supervising new officers, getting them ready to leave for France. Not long before the First Division left New York, Marshall offered a favor to 10 recently married second lieutenants. Their wives had come to New York with them so that they could be together for as long as possible. Marshall remembered his own entrance into the army as a second lieutenant and his brief honeymoon in Washington, D.C. before leaving for the Philippines. He told the men they would not be needed for two or three more days and dismissed them, allowing them extra time to be with their wives before reporting for duty. A year or so later, when the heavy fighting was over in France, eight of those ten men were dead. As for Captain Marshall, when he left with General Sibert and the First Division for Europe, Lily and her mother went back to Lexington to live. It was more than two years before he would see them again.

The First Infantry Division of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) landed in France on June 26, 1917. General Sibert was the first man off the ship, followed closely by Captain George C. Marshall. The Americans had arrived. Many of the

men were young and almost none were trained as soldiers. Yet they were optimistic, confident the war would be over soon, and excited at the prospect of visiting a foreign country, especially France. They were in for a terrible surprise. Wendy Lubetkin, writing in her book, *Marshall*, explained, "The eager young American troops could not have imagined the horrors that awaited them on the front stretching from the English Channel to the Swiss frontier: the foggy battlefields strewn with mines and barbed wire; the muddy, corpse-filled trenches: the clouds of poisonous gas."[5]

All of the American artillery troops needed more training in the use of modern weapons. Most of the infantry recruits had never handled weapons before. The guns were issued to them while they were on the train to New York, or after they boarded the ship when leaving. Artillery troops needed training in the use of howitzers, mortars, and cannons before they could fight on the front. Machine guns, another challenge, were new to everyone in 1917. As the young soldiers trained to use the unfamiliar weapons, there were accidental injuries, even deaths.

The French were happy to have the American forces, but they didn't realize how inexperienced the men were. French armies were suffering terrible losses, as high as a quarter million in a single battle. Both French and British generals wanted to mix American troops with their own, not waiting for American officers to train the "green" soldiers. Badly needing the fresh troops to reinforce lines, or replace the dead and wounded, they were impatient with the Americans for "practicing at war" before going to the real front lines.

These Allied officers were especially irritated with Pershing's insistence that American units not only train but fight independently of their French and British counterparts. All of these issues put pressure on AEF headquarters, especially Pershing, to get U.S. troops into action. This pressure to get units combat-ready filtered down to every command. Despite the fact that training manuals and clear procedural orders had not been made available to certain divisions, they were expected to train the men in elaborate "combat demonstrations."

General Pershing took an avid interest in First Division training in the summer and fall of 1917. In October, Pershing and some of his staff paid a short-notice visit to division headquarters to watch a combat demonstration. Captain Marshall was acting as division chief of staff and had planned this exercise according to limited information he had received from AEF headquarters. General Sibert arrived almost at the same time as Pershing and had no prior knowledge of the maneuver. Afterward, Pershing asked Sibert to comment on how he thought the demonstration went. Pershing clearly did not find his response satisfactory, and burst into a long tirade, berating all of the officers, especially General Sibert.

Captain Marshall saw this as an injustice to General Sibert, whom he respected. As Marshall explained it, "He [Pershing] was very severe with General Sibert . . . in front of all the officers . . . and generally he just scarified us. He didn't give General Sibert a chance to talk at all." As Marshall listened to Pershing's tongue-lashing, he grew angrier and angrier. Marshall stepped up to Pershing to explain what had happened; he felt responsible because he had planned the maneuver. That may

have been Marshall's mistake. General Pershing shrugged his shoulders, turned, and started to walk away from Marshall. That was General Pershing's mistake.

For a moment, Marshall did not seem to consider the outcome of a junior officer boldly taking issue with a field commander's action. He put his hand on Pershing's arm and insisted on talking to him, or rather at him. When Marshall was angry, he talked hard and fast, his blue eyes blazed, and he withered his adversary with a barrage of facts. By then, Marshall surely understood that he was arguing with the highest-ranking military officer of the American Expeditionary Forces, and taking a huge risk with his army career. He later explained that he knew he was in "up to my neck," and he "might as well not try to float, but to splash a little bit."

George C. Marshall told "Blackjack" Pershing, in so many words, that he was wrong. Further, it was not General Sibert's fault the troops were not ready to fight, the fault lay with Pershing's staff, since they kept changing their minds about rules and orders. Marshall told Pershing, "We have never received anything from your headquarters." General Pershing listened, then walked away saying, "Well, you must appreciate the troubles we have." Marshall still wasn't finished, saying, "Yes, again, General, but we have them every day and many a day, and we have to solve every one of them by night." When asked about the incident, General Marshall said, "I was just mad all over . . . . I had a rather inspired moment."

All of the officers looking on, hearing all that was being said, were shocked by Captain Marshall's behavior. They planned to say good-bye to him, figuring he had just gotten himself fired from his job. Marshall himself had no regrets. To those showing concern, he said, "All I can see is that I might get field duty instead of staff duty, and certainly that would be a great success." Surprisingly, there were no repercussions from Marshall's outburst. General Pershing did not mention the incident again, but from then on, when he revisited the First Division, he often sought Marshall's opinions. By mid-1918, Marshall would be on Pershing's staff.

While serving under General Sibert, Captain Marshall had the responsibility of drafting plans and writing orders. He wanted to make sure every officer knew what his job was and had the equipment to do it. But he also wanted combat experience and to be on the front line. Marshall felt that leading troops was the way to promotion, not sitting behind a desk. In June of 1918, George C. Marshall wrote a formal request for troop duty. Major General Robert L. Bullard, who had recently assumed command of the First Division, refused the request. In justifying his position, he wrote back: "because I know that Lieut. Col. Marshall's special fitness is for staff work and because I doubt that in this, whether it be teaching or practice, he has an equal in the Army to-day."

Though George C. Marshall was often at his desk, he did not fit the ordinary description of a staff officer. According to Alan Saunders, "One of the many factors that made him a superb staff officer was his unwillingness to accept hearsay as fact. Often, on his own initiative, he would venture to the front to see for himself. He was even cited for bravery under fire. More relevant, though, was his willingness to learn, to listen to the comments and experience of line officers, to fit

orders to field conditions." When at the front lines, he communicated with combat officers about the coordination of troop movements, including how to best transport equipment, rations, and other supplies.

In mid-July, shortly after Lieutenant Colonel Marshall's request for troop duty was denied, he was transferred to the Operations section at General Pershing's AEF general headquarters. He arrived just in time to play a major role in planning the Allied counteroffensive that would end the war.

The war in Europe in the spring of 1918 was reaching a critical stage. The Russians removed themselves from the conflict in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, and the Germans saw an opportunity to launch a major offensive that could force an armistice. At first, this offensive seemed successful, allowing the Germans to push 50 miles into France, within shelling range of Paris. In this crisis, the Allies appointed French Marshal Ferdinand Foch commander in chief of all their forces. Although his powers were limited, he provided coordination and unity of command that Marshall would remember in World War II. Along with this appointment, General Pershing offered American troops to help stem the German advance.

Spearheaded by American troops, by mid-summer the Germans' last offensive was reversed at the Second Battle of the Marne. This great counteroffensive steadily drove the German forces back and had cost them not just ground, as in the past, but their power to resist. The entire aspect of the war was changed. The tide of battle swung in favor of the Allies. Two major Allied offensives in the fall of 1918 helped set the stage for the defeat of the Central powers.

George C. Marshall's abilities as a coordinator and planner would be tested at AEF headquarters. He not only accepted the challenge, he was important in planning and organizing the final offensive that brought the war to an end. Under the command of Colonel Fox Conner, the two of them would "form the core of the group that planned the two great U.S. offensives of the war—Saint Mihiel and the Meuse-Argonne."[6] At Saint Mihiel a bulge, or salient, in the German defensive line was pressing against the Allied line. Marshall Foch had agreed to a U.S. attack on St. Mihiel on September 12, but with the understanding that these American troops would be shifted for a major offensive in the Meuse-Argonne by September 26.

This huge, complex, and extremely difficult operation took place between the Meuse River and the Argonne Forest. It was a part of a general Allied offensive involving 15 divisions. The Germans understood its threat, fortifying its line to the depth of 13 miles. As Mark Stoler explained, Marshall's task was "to plan for both offensives simultaneously and shift forces for the second while the first was still in progress." To accomplish this, he had to transfer 220,000 men out of the front line of the Meuse-Argonne. The second step was to move 600,000 into that line (400,000 of them from Saint Mihiel). To move these troops and equipment, Marshall had access to only three main roads and three rail lines. With the soldiers went 3,000 cannons, numerous horse-drawn wagons, and 900 trucks only slightly larger than a modern pickup truck.[7] Movements took place at night, under the cover of darkness, to maintain secrecy.

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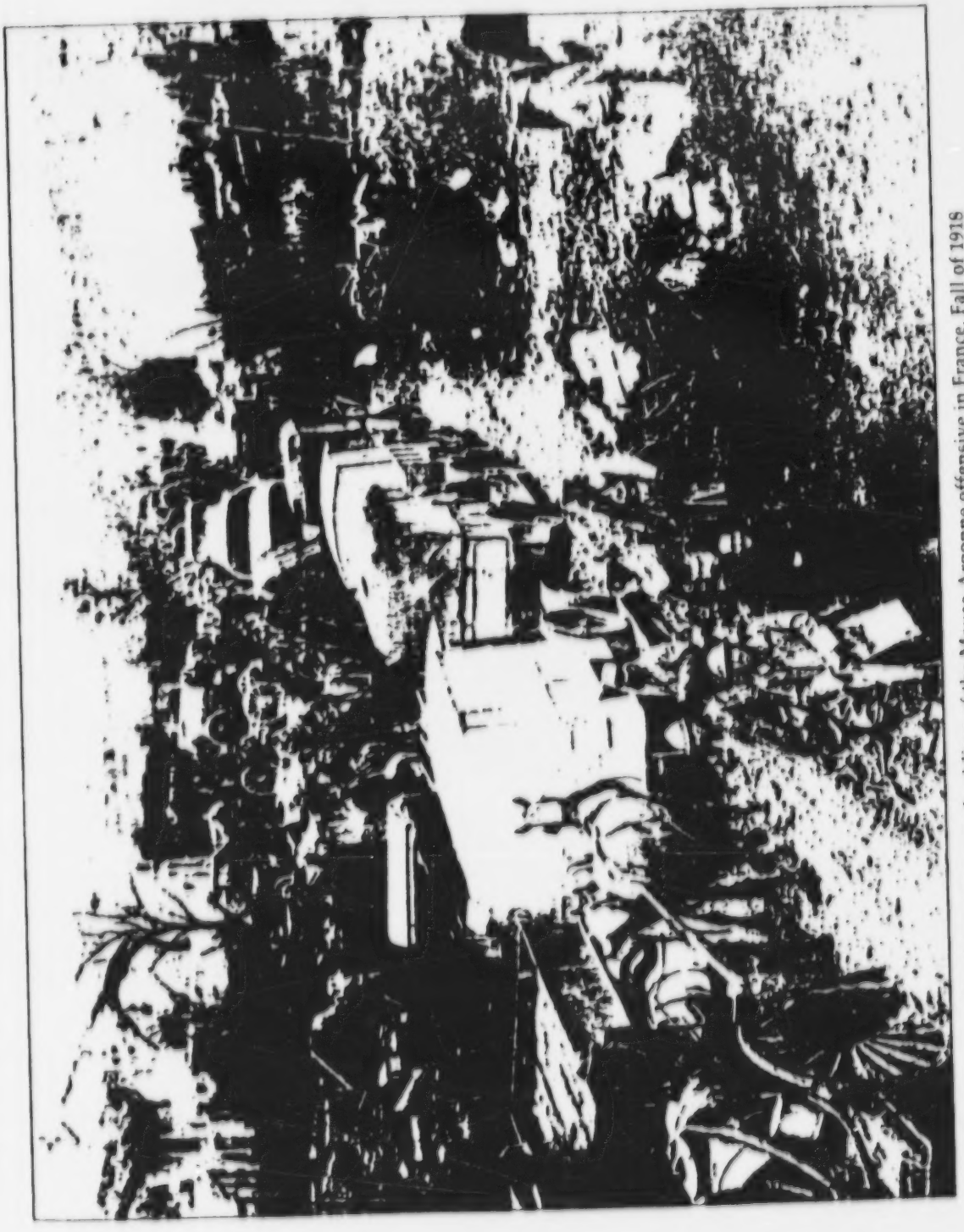

Trucks, wagons, and soldiers of the Meuse-Argonne offensive in France, Fall of 1918

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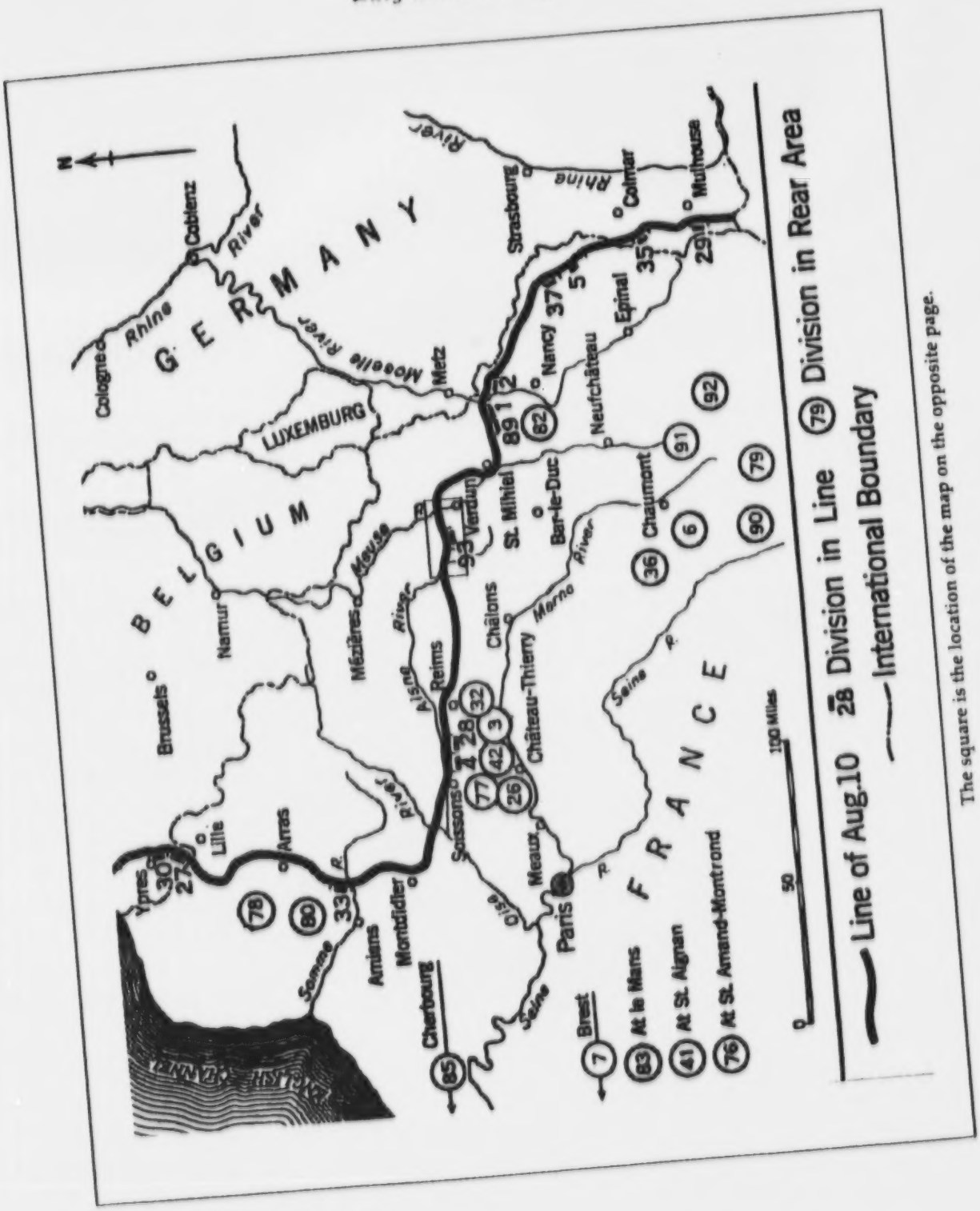

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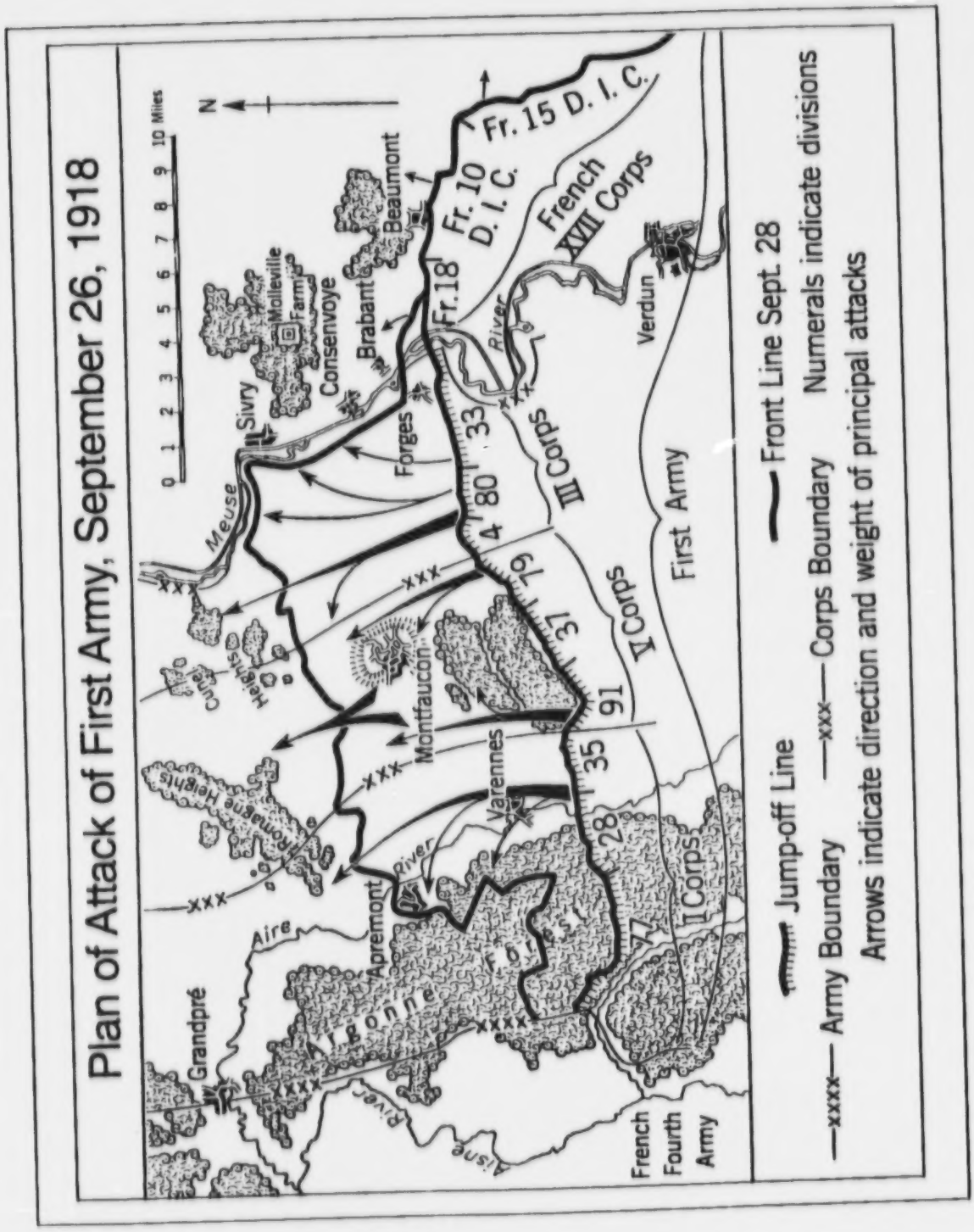

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Historian Mark Stoler wrote, "Marshall's planning was a logistical feat of unprecedented proportions, and it succeeded brilliantly." Marshall seemed to understand how to coordinate military tasks in operations involving several armies whose primary goal was to defeat a common enemy. Stoler related, "Fox Conner had told a young officer named Dwight Eisenhower to get an assignment with Marshall if at all possible, for in the future 'we will have to fight beside allies and George Marshall knows more about the techniques of arranging allied commands than any man I know. He is nothing short of a genius.'"[8]

On September 26, 1918, the offensive began and did not end until the armistice in November. The contribution of the Americans to this final offensive was significant. U.S. troops advanced against the Germans in the Argonne Forest as part of a broad-ranging 200-mile attack. American units in that action used more ammunition than the entire Union Army had in the four years of the Civil War. By the end of October, they had helped push the Germans to their own border, and had cut the enemy's line of supply to the front.[9] Furthermore, American soldiers occupied almost 25 percent of the Allied line. A weary German Army was outmaneuvered, in retreat, and facing fresh forces. Over 1 million U.S. troops were involved in the Meuse-Argonne operation. Allied troops maintained this series of relentless battles against the German lines, finally forcing the surrender of the Central powers. The armistice was signed at the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month of the year 1918, bringing the Great War to an end.

After the armistice was signed, the Allies prepared to make the peace official. The peace conference took place in the great Hall of Mirrors in the Palace of Versailles in France. President Woodrow Wilson was the head of the American delegation. His idealism was in sharp contrast to the leaders of France and Great Britain, who wanted to see Germany thoroughly punished. Over the months of negotiation, Wilson compromised away some of his cherished "Fourteen Points" for a democratic peace in Europe. As it turned out, Germany was forced to admit guilt for the war, stripped of its overseas colonies, and made to pay harsh reparations.

One of Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, his idea for an international peacekeeping organization called The League of Nations, was included. Wilson believed that the League would provide a forum for discussing the treatment of member nations, including Germany. He reasoned that some of the harshness of the treaty might be softened in postwar league sessions. Though he recommended that the United States accept the treaty, (imperfect as it was), the Senate refused to ratify it. That meant the United States would not be part of the League. Without the leadership and support of the very country that had advanced the idea, the League was like a table with one leg missing. Not strong enough to bear the weight of power struggles that arose in the unstable postwar world, the league proved weak and useless. The severity of the treaty, and the failure of the league, helped create social and political conditions in Europe that would set the stage for another war. George C. Marshall would not forget the harsh effects this "peace" had on the defeated countries of World War I.[10]

General John J. Pershing and his aide-de-camp, Colonel George C. Marshall, in France, 1919

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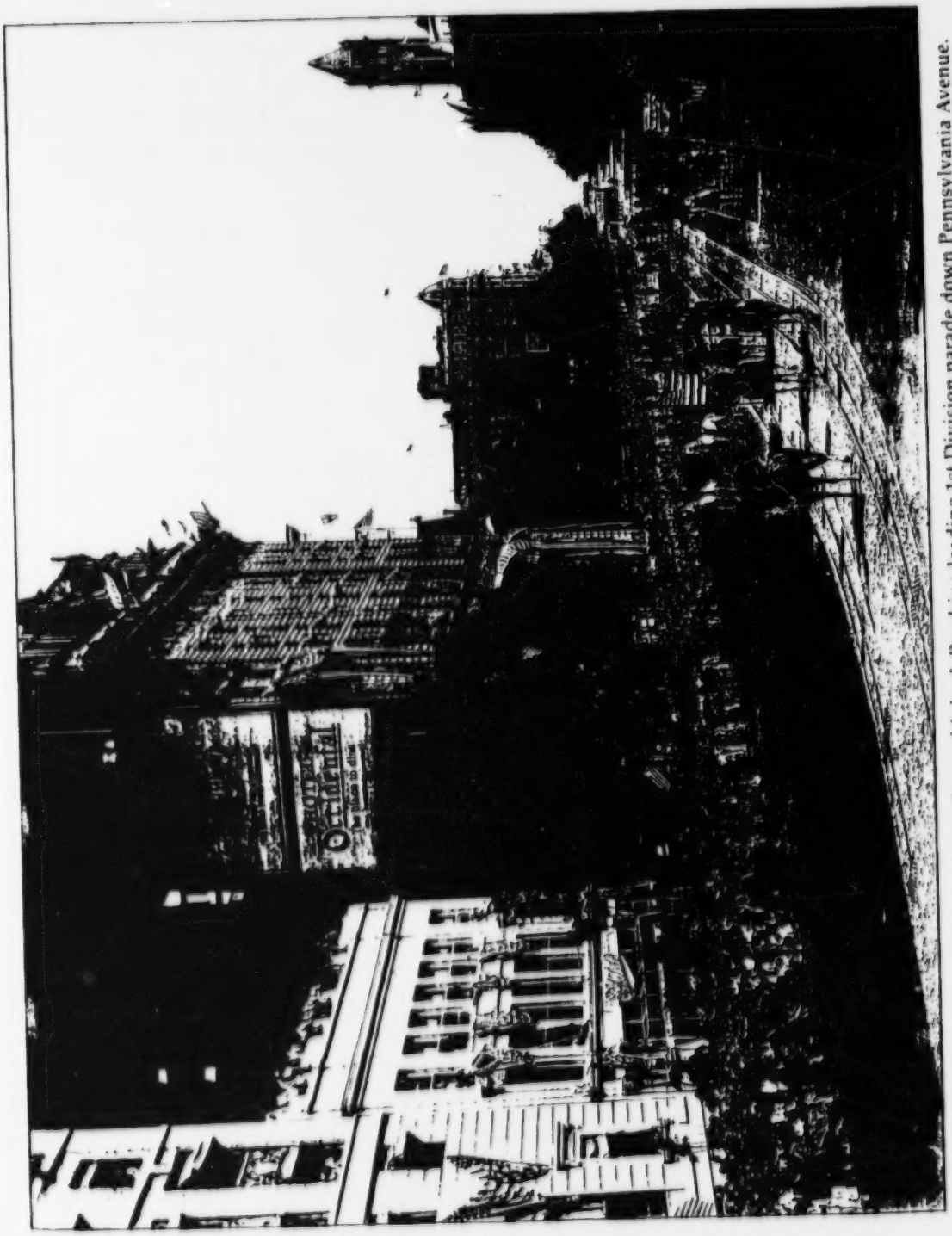
After the armistice, Colonel Marshall would not be among the first to arrive back in the United States. By April 1919, he would become the aide-de-camp to General Pershing, who was still in Europe. As Alan Saunders said in *George C. Marshall, General for Peace*, "Marshall was a dashing 38, a colonel in a triumphant army and at the right hand of its leader." He was beside Pershing as he received victory praise from all the countries he toured. Saunders states, "What polish he might have lacked he quickly acquired. He was also to see how power works at the highest circles. The men and the views he met during this period would stand him in very good stead, for 20 years later he would face the same men or their successors either as enemies or allies."[11]

General Pershing and his staff left Paris for the States in September 1919. The ship that brought them home from France docked in New York City. They, along with returning troops, were welcomed by city fathers, the governor of New York, and selected national officials, including the vice president of the United States. There were many celebrations, including a ticker-tape parade, cheering multitudes, and elaborate banquets. But, as Forrest Pogue said, "New York had what every returning hero wanted most, wives and families—home." Lily was there to greet him. Pershing and his party, including the Marshalls, continued on to Philadelphia, where they were wined and dined, before traveling to Washington, D.C. Twenty-five thousand combat veterans, led by General Pershing, paraded down Pennsylvania Avenue to the White House, while thousands of people lined the streets to see them.

While they were still crossing the Atlantic, word was received that the U.S. Congress had given General Pershing the permanent rank of General of the Army, along with four stars, the highest rank in the army. Marshall knew he was lucky to be working with the great general, but he was still unhappy with his own status. His promotions to major and colonel during the war had only been temporary. Once the war was over, the size of the army was reduced, and fewer officers were needed. Yet, it seemed his impressive work as a staff officer would be rewarded, because on July 1, 1920, he was promoted to the permanent rank of major, regular army.

In July 1921, General John J. Pershing was appointed by President Warren G. Harding as army chief of staff. During the next three years, as General Pershing's assistant, Marshall learned the ropes in all areas of general staff work. He sat in on meetings between Pershing and President Harding, wrote and sometimes gave speeches for the chief of staff, and prepared Pershing for testifying before the Congress on military issues. Marshall took on more and more responsibility for Pershing's duties, especially since the general traveled frequently. When Pershing vacationed in France, once being away for six months, Major Marshall filled in for him completely. During his time with Pershing, another promotion came through. In August 1923, George Marshall was elevated to lieutenant colonel.

One good aspect of being in charge of Pershing's office was that it allowed Marshall to reside in Washington. Lily enjoyed living in the big city. The Marshalls moved into an apartment, near Pershing's office, at 2400 16th Street.



Washington, D.C., September 17, 1919—General John J. Pershing leading 1st Division parade down Pennsylvania Avenue. Colonel George C. Marshall is on the white horse to the left.

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They were able to settle down and enjoy being together again. Sadly, due to her delicate health, Lily could not have children. George C. Marshall was very fond of children and enjoyed being with them.

In the same apartment building with the Marshalls lived the Thomas Page family. Rose Page was an eight-year-old when she met the tall army colonel one day in the elevator. George C. Marshall and Rose Page developed an adult-child, father-daughter type of friendship that lasted for the next 40 years. For him, she was the daughter the Marshalls could not have. Colonel Marshall and Lily invited Rose to their apartment for meals, took her on picnics, and for rides in their car, even to Lexington to visit Lily's mother. Rose chose Colonel Marshall to be her godfather when she was confirmed. Rose thought Mrs. Marshall was a kind and beautiful lady, just as Colonel Marshall did. Years later, she recalled Marshall's devotion to his wife: "He showered Lily with a hundred little attentions. He fetched and carried. He planned little surprises. He was ever solicitous about her health and comfort."

Rose Page Wilson wrote a book, *General Marshall Remembered*, published in 1968, about her experiences with the Marshalls. In an interview, Mrs. Wilson said that George C. Marshall exhibited the same qualities in his private life that he did in his professional life—integrity, patience, tolerance, and understanding. She credited him with teaching her fairness, impartiality, and compassion. One such lesson came when she was 10, and learned about the hazards of gossip.

One day Rose asked Colonel Marshall about a rumor she had heard. The story was that a young and flashy woman who lived in their apartment building was having a romance with a well-known married general who lived there as well. Marshall's reaction to her questions surprised her. As she said, "To my dismay, Colonel Marshall exploded, saying, 'Don't you ever repeat talk like that again!' He said he didn't know if the slander . . . was true, and neither did anybody else . . . . He curbed his anger immediately and replied gently that perhaps he hadn't made it clear to me why he disapproved of gossip. It was wrong, he explained, because careless talk might unfairly and seriously injure a person's reputation. 'All gossip, whether it's flattering or unkind, has a numerator of personal opinion, a denominator of doubtful facts, and is multiplied by exaggeration. So you see, Rosie, the answer is bound to be wrong.'"[12]

In 1924, General Pershing retired as chief of staff, and George C. Marshall put in a request for a new assignment. He needed to spend time with troops if he wanted to be a general. The U.S. Army was back to pre-world war numbers again with only about 130,000 men, so it wasn't easy to get troop duty. From 1924 to 1927 his assignment was second in command with the 15th Infantry troops stationed in Tientsin, China. The job of the 15th Infantry was to protect United States citizens living in northern China, in the area of Tientsin. American businessmen engaged in the import-export trade there had families residing in that region. China's central government was powerless at the time, and the United States feared that Americans would be caught in the middle of disputes between Chinese warlords.

Lily in Tientsin, China, July 1924-1927

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Marshall fully enjoyed his three-year tour of duty. He found his job less tedious than being in an office all the time, for he enjoyed working with the soldiers and meeting the other officers. Training a Mongolian pony, playing tennis or squash, and learning to speak Chinese provided needed recreation. While George was busy, Lily and her mother went shopping. Chinese goods were plentiful and inexpensive for Americans in China and would be highly prized as souvenirs of their travels when they returned to the States. Marshall took pleasure in seeing Lily active and happily engaged. They had more time together than they had had in earlier years.

When they returned from China to Washington, in June 1927, Marshall was assigned to lecture at the Army War College. Teaching was the kind of work that George Marshall found most stimulating, most exciting. According to Forrest C. Pogue, Marshall was "one of those rare teachers who make a difference, who open minds in such a way that they never afterward quite close again or forget the excitement of a new idea."

Lily looked forward to setting up a real home in the city, and showing off some of their Chinese treasures. George C. Marshall loved Lily, and if Washington made her happy, he would work there. Marshall began his teaching, catered to his wife, and tried to get Lily to rest and recover from a recent illness that had left her weak and frail. When she had a medical examination, doctors found a goiter growing inward from her thyroid gland. The growth had to be removed. Doctors told Lily that she needed to build up strength so she could tolerate the surgery. George gave Lily extra attention during this period, encouraging her to follow the doctor's orders. After just two weeks, she had gained weight and seemed stronger. The surgery was scheduled.

After the operation, she recuperated in the hospital. George was teaching every day and did little to unpack or settle things in their new house. He felt Lily wanted to do those things for herself. He visited her whenever he could, and she looked forward to seeing him. Lily wrote in a letter to her aunt, "George is so wonderful and helps me so. He puts heart and strength in me." Lily's improvement was slow but steady, and after two weeks she seemed to have recovered. On the morning of September 15, 1927, the doctor told her she could go home the next day. She was excited and happy with that news, and sat at a table to write a letter to her mother. While writing, she slumped forward. Her weak heart had failed her. With pen in hand, Elizabeth Coles Marshall died. What was the last word she wrote? It was "George."

Lily's death sent George C. Marshall into a deep, soul-aching, and painful time. He still went to work and did his teaching, but he wandered numbly about the house, the house that Lily had planned to decorate with their Chinese treasures. Now that she was gone, those items caused him sorrow instead of happiness. He didn't know who to turn to or what to do. With no children or close friends to help him, Lily's death left him empty and terribly lonely. Despite his grief, he continued to teach, attending to his duties at the War College. He desperately wanted a change of scene. What he really needed was a new job, one that would occupy him both mentally and physically. Luckily for Colonel George C. Marshall, his friends in charge of army postings and assignments came to his rescue.

Chapter 5

The Making of a General — From Fort Benning to Vancouver Barracks

1927-1938

In November 1927, the change came which Marshall so desperately needed. He had always wanted to be an instructor at Fort Benning, Georgia, the largest military school in the U.S. Army. Because his teaching record at the War College was excellent, he was offered the post of assistant commandant of the Infantry School, a division of the Officers Training School at Benning. He accepted immediately. The school at Fort Benning, designed for training officers of company-size units, provided refresher courses for senior officers of the Reserves and the National Guard. His new job would provide the prospect for professional advancement, and put demands on his time that might distract him from his grief. General Marshall recalled, "The change to Benning was magical . . . caught me at my most restless moment and gave me hundreds of interests, an unlimited field of activity, delightful associates, and all outdoors to play in."

As the head of the Academic Department at Benning, Marshall was able to put in place the changes he thought were needed to prepare officers for leadership. According to Forrest Pogue, "It was a happy circumstance that at his 'most restless moment' he was given a teaching job . . . with . . . the authority and scope to make a mark not only on the Infantry School but on the United States Army." Fresh in his memory were the tough lessons of World War I. Marshall thought that training methods for infantry officers at Fort Benning had been based on the American experience in that war, and it had not given them a true understanding of modern warfare. After all, the United States had entered late and had participated in "a very special form of fighting, one of static or siege warfare." Marshall believed these young officers had to focus on what it might be like in the very early stages of the war. For instance, in opening battles, there were no well-mapped trenches or elaborate telephone networks as the First Division had found when it first entered the war.[13]

In the classroom, Marshall presented a strong image of the realities he had experienced in Europe: "Picture the opening campaign of a war. It is a cloud of uncertainties, haste, rapid movements, congestion on the roads, strange terrain, lack of ammunition and supplies at the right place and the right time." He continued, "Add to this a minimum of preliminary information of the enemy . . ., poor maps, and a speed of movement . . ., resulting from fast flying planes, fast moving tanks, armored cars, and motor transportation in general." Making his final point, he said, "There you have warfare of movement such as swept over Belgium or Northern France in 1914, but at far greater speed. That, gentlemen, is what you are supposed to be preparing for."

Marshall updated the methods of military tactics at the Infantry School, concentrating on three main ideas. First, orders and plans given to officers had to be kept simple. As he said, "We must develop . . . methods so simple and so brief that the citizen officer of good common sense can readily grasp the idea."

General Marshall and instructors, Fort Benning, Georgia, 1930-31. Left to right, first row: M. C. Stayer, J. W. Stilwell, G. C. Marshall, W. F. Freehoff, E. F. Harding; second row: Howard Liston, Omar N. Bradley, Emil Leard, Freemont Hodson

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Second, officers had to be offered the freedom to innovate and deal with the unexpected in combat situations. At Benning, he banned written lectures, insisting that the trainees be placed in field situations and given "hands-on experience," forcing them to do quick and original thinking. When he set up maneuvers for his students, he often excluded maps, or gave them maps with missing sections, to encourage problem-solving.[14] He pointed out, "The art of war has no traffic with rules, for the . . . circumstances and conditions of combat never produce the same situation twice." Finally, he understood that the next war would be one of movement, in which the fields of battle would be greatly enlarged by modern war machinery, especially airplanes, tanks, and trucks. Marshall taught his officers that the best army would be a highly mobile army. He believed this approach was especially suited to the American character and a citizen-soldier army.[15]

The traditional army methods of fighting a war were being changed, and some of the regular staff and student officers had difficulty in making the adjustment. Marshall's leadership skills helped the teachers understand and accept the changes, so they could gradually work them into their teaching routines. He wanted the instructors to use the new methods because they believed they were better, rather than simply following his orders. Ed Cray writes in *General of the Army, George C. Marshall, Soldier and Statesman*: "In just short of five years, Marshall managed to thoroughly revamp both the instructional style and the technical concepts taught the 150 lieutenants and captains in each year's class." More than two hundred of "Marshall's Men," as they called themselves, served as officers in World War II. Some became famous, including Omar Bradley, an important general in the Normandy invasion, and George Patton, the leader of tank armies and hero of the Battle of the Bulge. Marshall's leadership techniques and his efforts to upgrade the efficiency of the instruction given to army officers became known as the "Benning Revolution."

While the work of the Benning Revolution kept him busy during the day, the nights and weekends were difficult. Though he went riding, joined the Rotary Club, and attended social events, he was still a man in the grip of grief over the loss of his wife. Marshall's health suffered. He lost too much weight and experienced an irregular heart rate and high blood pressure. His doctor was concerned, afraid of a possible physical breakdown. Colonel Marshall was ordered to make changes in his lifestyle. For starters, he was to get more exercise, give up social drinking, and stop smoking. George Marshall agreed with the doctor's orders. Since drinking was illegal during this Prohibition Era, he found a double reason for avoiding alcohol. He also managed to give up cigarettes, after many years as a chain smoker.

Following doctor's orders for increased exercise was the easiest part. Marshall enjoyed being out-of-doors, and liked combining exercise with relaxation. He swam and played tennis, often daily. Hunting birds allowed him walking time in the woods and fields. He was an avid horseman and rode every morning. Colonel Marshall involved others in his outdoor activities, organizing fox hunts for the officers and their wives, and even setting up cross-country "treasure hunts."

Still, Marshall was lonely. In 1928 his mother died. Less than a year later, Lily's mother died. One by one his links to the past were broken.[16] Visits from his sister, Marie, and Rose Page, his goddaughter, helped some, and so did an endless round of social activities. He hosted dinner parties at his house and was invited often to the homes of other married friends. Marshall became an entertaining storyteller, perhaps as a way to extend the time away from his empty house. Though he was slowly adjusting to life without Lily, he could not imagine that he would marry again. He knew he could never find another Lily. And indeed, he did not. He found a Katherine.

A dinner invitation in 1929 brought a new and different kind of woman into Marshall's life. Katherine Tupper Brown, a former stage actress and a widow with three teenaged children, was visiting in nearby Columbus, Georgia. Some friends invited her and her daughter, Molly, for dinner one evening. Katherine was told that her dinner companion was to be "a very interesting officer from Fort Benning." She was an attractive woman, tall and dark-haired, two years younger than George Marshall, and quite proper. Only a year had passed since her husband, a Baltimore lawyer, had been tragically killed by a deranged client. She was hesitant to venture into social activities, especially one with a hint of romance.

When she arrived at her friend's house, Marshall was already there, standing in the living room by the fireplace. In her book, *Together*, Katherine Marshall wrote, "My first impression was of a tall, slender man with sandy hair and deep-set eyes. He refused the cocktails when they were served and this attracted my interest." She said to him, "You are a rather unusual army officer. I've never known one to refuse a cocktail before." George C. Marshall asked her how many army officers she knew, and she replied, "Not many." In describing him later, she said, "I will never forget. George had a way of looking right through you. He had such keen blue eyes and he was straight and very military."

When it was time to leave the dinner party, Colonel Marshall asked if he might drive her to the home of Mrs. Blanchard, where she was staying. Since her daughter had left earlier in the evening, Mrs. Brown agreed. They drove around and around the streets of Columbus for about an hour. Finally, Katherine Brown asked the colonel how long he had been at Fort Benning, and he told her two years. She then asked, "After two years, haven't you learned your way around Columbus?" Marshall replied, "Extremely well, or I could not have stayed off the block where Mrs. Blanchard lives."

On October 15, 1930, George C. Marshall and Katherine Tupper Brown exchanged wedding vows at Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Baltimore, Maryland. They planned a small wedding with just family and close friends. But when word got out that General John J. Pershing would be Marshall's best man, a crowd formed outside the church to greet the famous general, along with the wedding party. The Marshalls left the ceremony and went directly to the train where an even larger crowd had gathered. So much for a quiet wedding. By the next afternoon, the newlyweds were back at Fort Benning, where Katherine barely had time to change her clothes for the "commandant's reception." The next day, she learned that she ...pected to host an afternoon reception for 100 people.

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Katherine Tupper Marshall, 1939

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Being a former stage actress who was constantly before the public made her a "quick study" for her role as an officer's wife.

Colonel Marshall had a new role as well—that of stepfather. He fit into this new position comfortably and easily, because he had always gotten along well with children. Though he did not adopt them, Molly, Clifton, and Allen became the family he'd never been able to have in his first marriage. After a long visit to Katherine's summer house at Fire Island, New York, the previous summer, the children had come to like and accept him. Molly and Clifton called him "The Colonel." Allen, the youngest and closest to Marshall, liked to say he was one of the few people, along with his mother, ever to call him "George."

While Lily Marshall had been frail and delicate, Katherine Marshall was the opposite. She was healthy and strong, fond of exercise and fresh air. She was an "about face" in wives for George C. Marshall. His love for Lily was forever strong, but so was his comfortable and secure love for Katherine. Marshall had become a contented man. After serving five years at Ft. Benning, overcoming the grief of losing his first wife, and making a new life for himself with Katherine, it was time for another change.

In the spring of 1932, George C. Marshall was assigned to command a battalion of the Eighth Infantry at Fort Screven, Georgia. The military post had fewer than 400 men, but Marshall wrote to General Pershing that even if the post was small, it kept him, "out of doing just office work." Savannah was the city closest to Fort Screven, not more than 20 miles away. The Marshalls' friends at Fort Benning had told them that people in Savannah wanted little involvement with the army post. The Marshalls were not discouraged. The first Sunday after arriving at the post, they visited the Episcopal church in that old southern city. By the time the Marshalls left Screven a year later, they were friends with the mayor and many members of the business and professional community. They were so well liked that a large civic dinner was held in their honor. Lt. Colonel Marshall was given a baton inscribed: "To the Marshall of Savannah." He seemed to understand the importance of establishing a cordial link between the army post and nearby civilian communities. In the fall of 1933, Marshall was placed in command of the entire regiment and transferred to Fort Moultrie, South Carolina, situated in the middle of Charleston Harbor. With the transfer came word of a promotion to the permanent rank of colonel.

When the Marshalls moved to Fort Moultrie in 1933, the United States was in the middle of the Great Depression. Unemployment was as high as 25 percent. Crop failures forced farmers into bankruptcy, and pushed many of them to the cities in search of work. Bread lines stretched for blocks in major cities, and people were becoming desperate. The troops stationed at Fort Moultrie were better off than many civilians, but they suffered as well when Congress cut back on funds for the armed services. Though the cuts affected military officers, the lower ranks were hardest hit. A private's pay was reduced by as much as 44 percent, sergeants by 25 percent.[17]

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To help soldiers support their families, Colonel Marshall personally oversaw the planting of vegetable gardens and the building of chicken yards and hog pens. Knowing that the men were having a hard time feeding their families, he introduced a policy known as "the lunch pail" system. The mess officer was ordered to prepare larger portions of the midday meal, and was allowed to sell at cost the extra hot meals for the men to take home to their families. A soldier was able to feed his entire family for 15 cents a day. "We ate this midday dinner ourselves until the custom was well-established, so that he might know what the men were getting," recalled Katherine Marshall. She noticed that Marshall put as much thought into the welfare of his men as he did their military training.

When Franklin D. Roosevelt became president in March 1933, he resolved to do something about the depression that gripped the nation. He promised a "new deal" for the American people. Only weeks after his inauguration, Roosevelt sent a proposal to Congress asking for the creation of the Civilian Conservation Corps, (CCC). The Corps was set up to give jobs and training to young, out-of-work men who were 18 to 25 years old. Public works projects were then created for the employment of these young civilians. Examples of these CCC projects included the planting of 200 million trees in a vast soil conservation effort; cleaning streams and cutting firebreaks; and building bridges, visitors centers, campgrounds, roads and trails in national parks. In return the boys' families received a weekly allowance of $20, and the young men got $5 weekly, plus their keep.[18] By July 1933, the U.S. Army, charged with overseeing this public works effort, had created 1,468 work camps across the nation, and settled 275,000 young men into them.

In the summer of 1933, George C. Marshall was deeply involved in this CCC effort. Eventually, he would oversee the building of 19 CCC camps, spread out as far away from Fort Moultrie as southern Florida. He enthusiastically supported the idea of the CCC, and knew these young civilian men needed discipline, education, health, and career guidance. Marshall regularly visited and inspected the camps under his control, making sure they were clean and orderly. From one visit to the next, he was pleased to see the changes and improvements made in the young men. "From the first," Katherine Marshall said, "he was fascinated with the opportunities the CCC afforded to build up the minds and bodies of the youth of this country and also to lessen the hardship of the Depression."

His work with the CCC was straightforward and practical. Leonard Mosely in *Marshall, Hero of our Times*, wrote: "He brought in dentists and cleaned up the appalling condition of their teeth. He gave them food and taught them to eat it for the best physical results. He gave the illiterate lessons in reading and writing. He had the boys build a seawall in South Carolina and then showed them how to fish from it . . . . He went down to South Florida, where the great beach hotels were lying empty, and parlayed the managers into renting him rooms for next to nothing, then moved in his boys for courses in sailing and swimming." Colonel Marshall's successful work with civilians in South Carolina was satisfying to him personally, but it did not lead to promotions within the military. Marshall had hardly settled into his role as commander at Fort Moultrie before he received new orders that would lead to a different kind of civilian work far to the north.

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The Making of a General

In October 1933, Army Chief of Staff Douglas MacArthur appointed George C. Marshall as senior instructor of the Illinois National Guard in Chicago. This meant he was to be removed from the troop command he so enjoyed and would not be attached to the regular army. Service with the National Guard units was not taken into consideration when it came to promotions. Surely this assignment with "weekend warriors" in Chicago would hurt his career route toward achieving the rank of general. He was so upset with the change that he wrote to MacArthur asking him to reconsider. It did no good. MacArthur insisted that Marshall was the best infantry officer available to improve a weak National Guard organization there. So, the Marshalls made the move to a city apartment in Chicago. Katherine Marshall said, "Those first months in Chicago I shall never forget. George had a gray drawn look which I had never seen before and have seldom seen since."

Though Marshall was depressed at first with his new assignment, it didn't take long for him to regain his spirit. The Illinois National Guard was thought to be in a state of "crisis" because the men were poorly trained and considered incapable of handling any civil emergency should it arise. Marshall shaped them up. First, he set an example. Forrest Pogue said in *Education of a General* that Colonel Marshall caused a "flurry of excitement" with his "well-tailored uniform and shiny boots, a lean, tall, straight figure whose cold blue eyes could make a man feel . . . silly . . . . The colonel was a taskmaster who in drill demanded smartness, promptness, and precision." Though he would not allow any slack in the performance of duties, his officers soon learned that he accepted new and different ideas that benefited the army. He felt he had accomplished his purposes by the time he left the Illinois Guard. One side benefit of this three-year tour was the numerous contacts he had with civic and professional leaders in the Chicago area. This would serve him well in the future, when he needed to gain the cooperation and support of Congress, businessmen, and community leaders in both military and civilian roles he would later have.

Throughout his time in Chicago, Marshall had a nagging worry in the back of his mind: timely promotion to the rank of one-star general. For some time Colonel Marshall had hoped that some day he might be appointed as the army chief of Staff, the highest position possible for an army officer. To achieve this goal, he had to be at least a two-star general. The other unwritten rule was that the officer appointed army chief of staff had to be young enough to serve in that post for four years before reaching the mandatory retirement age of 64. Now in his mid-50s, he needed to jump-start his stalled career if he was to have a chance. Marshall took the unusual step of having General Pershing, his mentor and friend, write a letter to the secretary of war. He asked that Pershing simply encourage the secretary to read his (Marshall's) efficiency reports, going back to 1915. Marshall believed that his record would reveal an officer worthy of promotion. As it turned out, Marshall finally got high enough in the seniority system to receive his promotion to brigadier general in the fall of 1936. Almost everyone believed it was long overdue. With the new rank came a transfer. The Marshalls would be moving to Vancouver Barracks, Washington, a post just north of Portland, Oregon. Here he would command the Fifth Brigade of the Third Division and, much to his pleasure, supervise CCC camps in that district.[19]

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The Marshalls could hardly have been happier. They traded in a beat up old Ford for a 1936 Packard, and took a slow, three-week sightseeing trip across the country. Before reaching Vancouver Barracks, General Marshall telegraphed ahead saying he wanted to enter the post quietly, with no ceremonies. That was not to be, however, because when they arrived at the gate, a guard of honor and a band were waiting for them. His Irish setter, Pontiac, had been sent ahead of the general by train. An orderly held him on a leash during the review of troops, but when his master got out of the car, Pontiac broke his leash and came bounding. He was so excited he ran all around the line of officers who were waiting to greet the new general, and completely broke up the formality of the review. Marshall kept his military bearing, and no one would have guessed that, as Katherine said, "such a welcome from his dog meant more than any formal reception that could have been given him."[20]

Marshall had barely completed his first review of troops when he suffered a reoccurrence of his irregular pulse problem. It had flared up before he left Chicago and had earlier been diagnosed as a malfunctioning thyroid gland. After extensive testing, surgery seemed the only option. The diseased lobe was successfully removed at a San Francisco hospital in early 1937. Recovery was quick. He learned to carefully monitor his pulse and pay attention to his exercise program.

As commander of an important army post, Marshall was a highly visible member of the community. Just as he had in Chicago, he developed friendly ties, personally and officially, with political and business leaders in nearby Portland. He staged military displays at the post for the pleasure of the local citizens and made the military band and units of soldiers available for civic celebrations or parades. Marshall was often a popular speaker for various civic and community organizations, often promoting the value of the program he loved, the Civilian Conservation Corps. Once, he asked the chamber of commerce if he could ask some outstanding young men from area CCC camps to speak at one of their luncheons. The Portland businessmen did not immediately see what these boys had to offer the community. But after hearing the stories of their lives, especially how the corps had helped them, the chamber of commerce members were very touched. Also, through the example of these young men, it was evident how powerful this New Deal agency had been in improving their lives. Once again, Marshall strengthened the bond between his work and that of the community.

Marshall was in charge of 35 CCC camps in Oregon and Southern Washington. Sometimes he combined inspections trips with fishing or hiking in the magnificent countryside of the Northwest, often taking Katherine with him. Marshall did everything possible to improve morale in the camps. For example, if a boy had driven a truck for a certain distance without an accident, perhaps 5,000 miles, then he received a personal letter of congratulations from General Marshall. The young man could use that letter when he looked for a job. General Marshall started a Vancouver District CCC newspaper, *The Review*, which was a big success. It was a sharp-looking publication, packed with local news, along with gossip, poetry, photographs, and letters to the editor. It made the men feel important and helped them with their reading and writing skills.

George and Katherine Marshall on a fishing trip near Vancouver, Washington, 1937

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He tried several other innovative programs. One rather unusual project was a dental survey. As participants in the CCC, these young men got dental care, often for the first time in their lives. Because the boys were sent to Oregon and Washington state from all over the country, he decided to use them to conduct a national survey, to see which states had the best, and the worst, teeth! One of the U.S. Army dentists agreed to conduct the survey. Results were published in the *Oregon* Journal, some dental journals, and eventually *Time* magazine.[21]

Marshall would try anything to publicize the positive accomplishments of the CCC. Commenting on his work with the CCC, he would say, "It was the most instructive service I have ever had, and the most interesting." Long after he left the Vancouver area, he said he wished he could have been the national director of the CCC because he would have put more military training and discipline into the corps. He believed when the CCC boys turned into strong young men, they would become the foundation of the citizen army that our country could depend on in case of another war.

In May 1938, Brigadier General Marshall received orders to report to Washington, D.C., as head of the War Plans Division of the General Staff. This disappointed Marshall, since he wanted to continue troop duty. Not only did he like this duty, but he believed this type of command would increase his status, making it more likely that he would be considered to replace Army Chief of Staff Malin Craig when he retired in 1939. But, once again, orders were orders. The Marshalls left Washington State and headed for Washington. They remembered their time in the Northwest with great fondness. Katherine was later to say that the Vancouver Barracks assignment was "two of the happiest years of our life."

Chapter 6

Chief of Staff Years — Preparing for War

1939-1941

The peaceful days of inspecting CCC camps in the beautiful northwestern countryside had come to an end. General George C. Marshall was summoned to Washington in July 1938 to begin work in the Army's War Plans Division. It was the beginning of the most remarkable, eventful years of Marshall's life. In Europe and Asia the dark scudding clouds of a coming war were already gathering. Its fury would spread to all parts of the world and pull George C. Marshall directly into its center. The heat lighting had been visible for a long time, since the early 1920s.

Clouds darkened Italy's usually sunny skies. A dishonest politician named Benito Mussolini was promising to restore his country to the power and glory of ancient Rome. He had brought to Italy a thoroughly undemocratic movement called Fascism. Coming to power in 1922, he had used terrorist tactics and repressive laws to stamp out any opposition to his rule. A little more than a decade later, Mussolini was making aggressive moves beyond his borders, invading the east African country of Ethiopia in 1935. When the League of Nations protested this action, Italy simply withdrew from the organization and formed an alliance with Nazi Germany.

In Germany, a hate-filled former corporal named Adolph Hitler had been building his National Socialist German Workers Party (the Nazis) since the '20s. Germany's weak Weimar Republic, put in place during World War I after Kaiser Wilhelm abdicated the throne, had been seriously undermined by the harsh Treaty of Versailles. Germany was in economic ruin, and the new republic wasn't strong enough to solve its problems. Hitler saw this as a perfect opportunity to attract scared, desperate people to his party. He promised to rebuild Germany, return it to its former glory, and punish those he blamed, especially Jews and communists. Promoting the racial superiority of the German people and passionate militarism, Hitler began to fill the power vacuum created by the dying democratic government. Using a combination of both violent and legal means, by 1933 he had established a totalitarian dictatorship. By the time Marshall took his new job in Washington, in July 1938, Hitler had rearmed Germany, moved troops into the Rhineland—both moves violating the Treaty of Versailles—and annexed Austria.

A storm brewed over Spain as well. In 1936, General Francisco Franco, leading a group much like the Italian Fascists, revolted against the government, a moderate constitutional monarchy. The Loyalists, who supported the elected government, received limited aid from the Soviet Union; Franco received extensive support of troops and equipment from Italy and Germany. After three years of fighting, Franco took complete control and established a military dictatorship.

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On the other side of the world, imperial Japan was creating its own storm. A crowded island nation with few natural resources, it had been expanding its power on the Asian mainland since the start of the 20th century. Japan had an emperor, Hirohito, and a civilian cabinet that ruled in his name. Increasingly, the real power to make decisions, especially in foreign policy, lay with an ambitious group of army officers. In 1931, these officers provoked an incident in the northeast China region of Manchuria. They used it as an excuse to conquer the province. By 1937, Japan had brought all of China's coastal cities under its control. Its leaders soon saw the value in extending Japan's control over other areas of Southeast Asia to get much-needed resources, such as oil and rubber.

Into this climate of crisis came George C. Marshall. In October 1938, only three months after arriving at the War Plans Division, he was made the Army's deputy chief of staff. He received this promotion at a critical time. In Europe, Hitler and Mussolini had just invited French and British leaders to a conference in Munich, Germany. France and Great Britain were either directly or indirectly allied with Czechoslovakia, and Hitler wanted something from the Czechs. He was demanding that they turn over the Sudetenland, a small region of the country on the Austrian-German border. Hitler claimed this German-speaking region rightfully belonged to Germany and had been unjustly taken away by the Treaty of Versailles. Germany's dictator insisted this was his "last territorial claim in Europe." The French and British, who still had the horrors of world war fresh in their memories, wanted badly to preserve peace. They brought pressure on the Czechs to surrender the land. Signing the Munich Agreement in September 1938, the leaders allowed Hitler to annex the Sudetenland. Most people realized that the European democracies had only bought some time, even though the British prime minister, Neville Chamberlain had said the agreement would bring "peace in our time." Some called it peace, but others called it appeasement, or "giving in" to the enemy. Soon war would come again.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt, serving his second term as president, was alarmed by events in Europe and Asia, but knew that many Americans clung to the idea that the United States could remain neutral. Many believed that participation in World War I had been a mistake which would be repeated unless careful measures were enacted. Responding to those fears, Congress passed laws in 1935 and 1937 lessening the possibility that the country would be drawn into another European war. The laws prohibited the sale or shipment of U.S. arms to ***any*** foreign nations engaged in war. American citizens were not allowed to travel on ships owned by any nation at war. Trade would be limited to nonmilitary items, and must be paid for in cash and transported by the warring country ("cash and carry").

The internationalists believed the isolationists were short-sighted in their thinking. They thought that if the Axis powers could be a threat to European democracies, then they could eventually threaten American security as well. Roosevelt's sentiments were clearly in the internationalist camp. If war was coming, France and Britain not only would need time to prepare, but they also would want American-made airplanes. With the isolationist mood in the country, Roosevelt could hardly suggest that the government appropriate funds so our factories could

build airplanes for France and Britain. His approach in 1938 was to tell the people that rearming our country was a means of *defending* U.S. *neutrality* should war break out. Specifically, he wanted to strengthen American air power by building 10,000 planes, some of them in new, government-operated factories.

As deputy chief of staff, General Marshall was called to a high-level White House meeting in November, 1938, to hear Roosevelt outline this plan. The president wanted Congress to finance the production of these planes, but he ignored other important funding such as providing flight crews. Also missing was any mention of money for troops, tanks, anti-aircraft guns, or a thousand other tools of war. After Roosevelt laid out the plan, he asked the military chiefs who were present for their thoughts. Marshall disagreed with this unbalanced approach, and believed his opinion was shared by the other officers. To his amazement, they all agreed with Roosevelt. As Marshall later said, "He finally came around to me . . . I remember he called me 'George.' (I don't think he ever did it again . . . I wasn't very enthusiastic over such a misrepresentation of our intimacy.) So he turned to me . . . and said, 'Don't you think so, George?' I replied, 'I am sorry Mr. President, but I don't agree with that at all.'" Marshall said the generals were telling him good-bye as they left the meeting, believing his tour in Washington was over.

Yet, Roosevelt was able to accept Marshall's no-nonsense directness just as Pershing had in France during World War I. In April 1939, Marshall was again summoned to the White House. This time President Roosevelt told him that he wanted him to be army chief of staff when General Malin Craig retired. Just like that, Marshall knew that he would have the highest position in the U.S. Army. Yet Marshall had no intention of sacrificing honesty to hold this position. He told the president that he must be able to speak his mind, and asked him if that would be all right. The president said, "Yes." Then Marshall said to Roosevelt: "You say 'yes' pleasantly, but it may be unpleasant." Roosevelt nodded and smiled. That issue settled, Marshall said, "I feel deeply honored, sir, and I will give you the best I have."[21] So often in Marshall's earlier military career, he had been disappointed with the slowness of his promotions. Now he gained ground with extraordinary speed. As Mark Stoler said, "Chief of Staff was the highest rank in the army, a rank that carried with it the four stars of a full general. Just prior to the appointment, Marshall had had only one star. Three years earlier, he had had no stars."

George C. Marshall became the army chief of staff on September 1, 1939. This was a big day in his life, but most Americans would remember it for another reason. As Alan Saunders said, that "was the day . . . Hitler had chosen to unleash the full fury of his Stuka dive-bombers and his rumbling Panzer tanks into a hapless Poland." The Germans had long since broken the promises made to France and Britain in the Munich Agreement. Not only had Hitler's armies taken the Sudetenland, but they had seized the rest of Czechoslovakia in March 1939. Not long after that, Hitler and his former foe, Joseph Stalin of the Soviet Union, signed a nonaggression pact. Between them they made plans to divide Poland. Meanwhile, Britain and France were making good on their promise to help Poland in the event of an attack.

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General George C. Marshall being sworn in as Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, September 1, 1939, Washington, D.C. Left to right: Secretary of War H.H. Woodring, General Marshall, Major General Emory Adams, adjutant general, U.S. Army.

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Three days after Hitler's invasion of Poland, they declared war on Germany. In writing to General Malin Craig a few weeks later, Marshall noted, "You know I think you timed your affairs very beautifully, because you certainly left me on a hot spot."

Marshall may have been on a hot spot, but he knew exactly where to concentrate his energies. He must prepare the United States for a possible armed conflict. The enemy had shown its power in dramatic ways. The German army rolled over Poland in a matter of weeks, using an impressive array of modern weapons and machines. Speed and firepower were the basic ingredients of a new kind of military offensive introduced by Germany: it was called blitzkrieg, or "lightning war." The idea here was to crush the enemy's forces before they had time to rally their defenses. It was backed by high levels of organization, disciplined soldiers, and awesome supply and support lines.[22]

With Roosevelt's encouragement, Congress revised its Neutrality Acts, this time permitting warring countries to purchase war matériel, but, as before, it had to be on the same cash-and-carry basis. If the Allies were to survive, however, they would have to be as effectively organized as the Germans. Moreover, the United States would have to be prepared to fight, should they become involved in this war. Preparing for war was the task set before General Marshall. Accomplishing this mission required funding from a Congress that was in an isolationist mood. American people who had barely survived the Great Depression would be asked to make sacrifices to provide needed resources. The U.S. Army would have to change tired, outdated approaches to warfare. One of Marshall's first efforts was to convince the Congress that the army must be enlarged. There would be no time to waste, for by early in April 1940, the German blitzkrieg had fallen upon Denmark and Norway, and in May swept through the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg.

On May 13, 1940, General Marshall, accompanied by the secretary of the treasury, Henry Morgenthau, went to see Roosevelt to get his approval for a funding request for $675 million to expand the army. With this level of resources, an army of 172,000 men could be increased to half a million. Leonard Moseley in *Marshall: Hero of Our Times* described the scene. Morgenthau actually made the presentation to Roosevelt, but asked the president to hear what General Marshall had to say. Breezily, Roosevelt said, "I know exactly what he's going to say. There's no need for me to hear him at all."

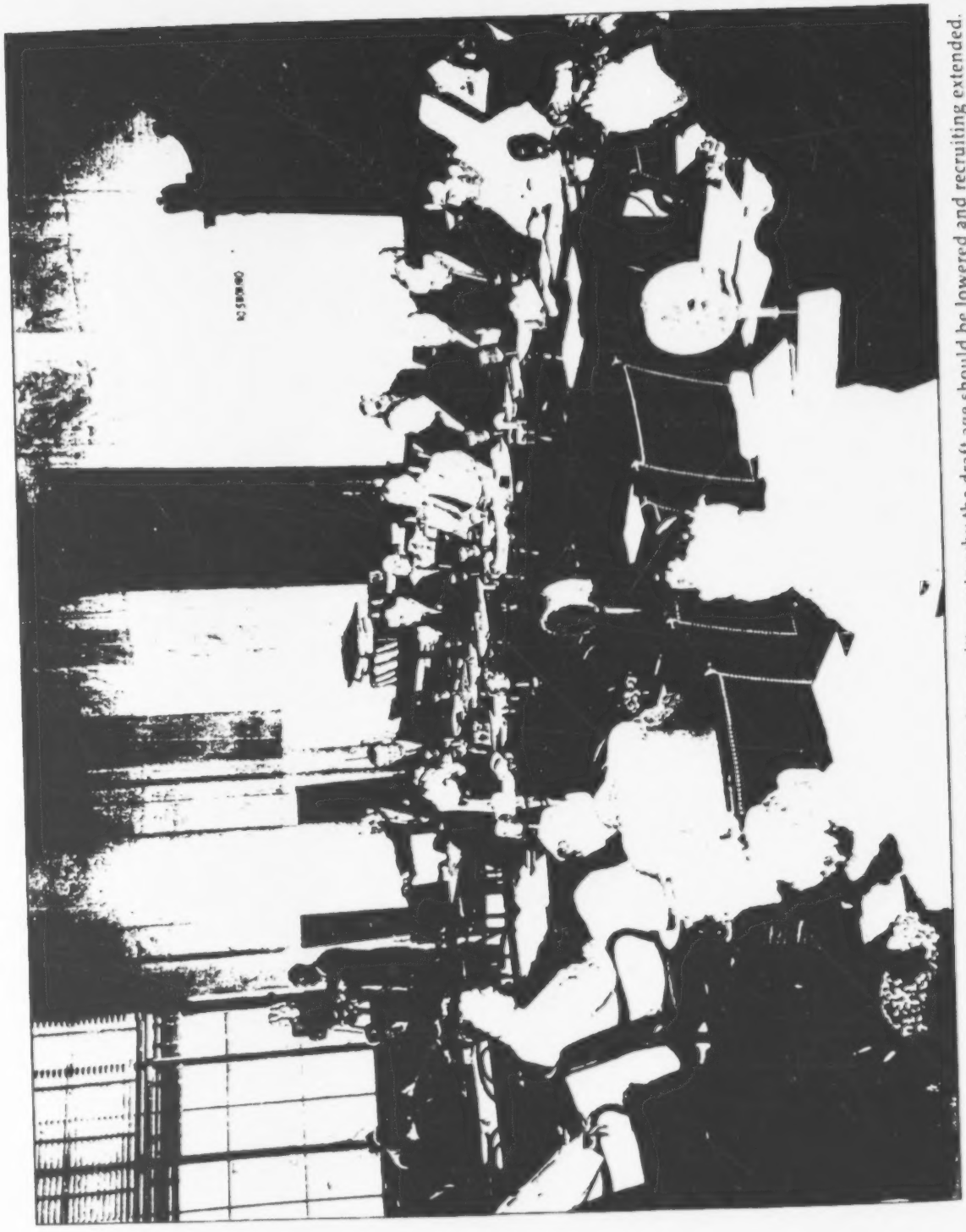
The president's response greatly angered Marshall, but, repressing his fury, he asked for just three minutes to state his view. In an impressive explanation, Marshall described the military situation in Europe and Asia. He laid out in detail how disastrous it would be if the army, in its present pathetic state, was asked to fight the enemies now facing Britain and France. He filled in the facts and figures. Didn't the president understand that our army couldn't possibly throw more than 15,000 men into combat at a time, while the Germans had 2 million men massed in Europe? Didn't the President realize, he asked, that only American preparedness was the answer? Finally, he said, "If you don't do something, and do it right away, I don't know what is going to happen to this country." Roosevelt's reply was cold

and clipped, without the usual friendliness. "Thank you, General. And thank you, Henry," was all he said. Morgenthau and Marshall gathered their belongings and turned to exit the room. As they reached the door, Roosevelt called, "Oh, General, come back and see me tomorrow. And bring me a list in detail of your requirements."[23] In late May, Roosevelt asked Congress for defense funding of $1 billion. Marshall saw this as a great breakthrough in his fight for preparedness. From that time until America's entry into the war, Marshall had an easier time convincing the president and Congress of the need for preparedness.

The mood of the American people was changing, too. Americans were horrified when they heard the news in May 1940 that German armed forces had bypassed the French defense known as the Maginot Line, and "had rolled to the shores of the English Channel."[24] Then 370,000 men from both French and British units were forced to evacuate from defeated France in what came to be called "The Miracle of Dunkirk." By late June, the Germans were parading through the streets of Paris, and Britain stood alone against the Nazis. Hitler thought that Winston Churchill, the British prime minister, would surely ask for peace. Then Hitler would be free to turn on his supposed ally, Russia. But Great Britain would not quit.

That summer, as the events began to unfold in Europe, Congress finally saw the merits of Marshall's plan to build a bigger military force. Marshall requested almost $4 billion to organize an effective army of perhaps 2 million by mid-1942. He needed the resources to arm and equip the draftees who would be called to serve their country. At that time the American army had a total of only 188,000 troops and ranked 16th in size, below Spain and Portugal. By September, 1940, Congress had agreed to the funding. It created the first peacetime draft and authorized the call-up of the National Guard and Reserves. This allowed the army to reach 800,000 by the end of 1940. The legislation was good for only one year, and when it came up again in 1941, it was renewed by a margin of a single vote. It was George C. Marshall's testimony before Congress that convinced the nation's lawmakers that the army must not be demobilized because a national emergency existed. By the time the United States went to war, in 1941, more than a million men were in uniform. By the end of the war, 10 million more would follow.[25]

During this time period, Marshall's influence with Congress grew enormously. Senators and congressmen from both parties came to respect him. Able to persuade legislators through straightforward, well-prepared, detailed testimony, he also respected the fact that in a democracy, lawfully elected leaders make the decisions, and American taxpayers foot the bills. He never lost sight of this fact. Moreover, he had a reputation for honesty. When Marshall came to the capitol to testify, he gave the impression of a self-disciplined, frank, and knowledgeable leader. He remained nonpartisan, despite often speaking for President Roosevelt, whose views tapped deeply political feelings. Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn said that when Marshall testified, "I knew I was in the presence of a great man." When reading from a text, he wasn't a great speaker, but he was absolutely spellbinding when asking Congress for something he passionately believed in.[26]



George C. Marshall testifying before a congressional committee as to why the draft age should be lowered and recruiting extended.

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As Marshall strived for preparedness, the situation in Europe worsened. Britain valiantly tried to fend off the Germans. Beginning in August 1940, this island country endured thousands of German air raids on its airfields and factories in what came to be called "The Battle of Britain." By the end of September, the air raids against military targets were halted and a planned German invasion (Operation Sea Lion) was called off. However, in an attempt to batter the British people into a peace settlement, the Germans began nighttime bombing raids against English cities, especially London. Many London parents sent their children to live with relatives in the country, beyond the range of the bombers. Each evening, those who were left listened for the warning sirens, then headed for the air raid shelters or retreated into the subway undergrounds while bombs fell night after night. The air raids would continue well into 1941. In the autumn of 1940, the English people, still clinging to life, desperately needed American aircraft if they were to survive. The United Sates was willing to sell war materials to the British, but there was a huge problem. The beleaguered English could no longer pay for these goods because their gold supply had been drained.

Knowing that Britain could not stand alone, Roosevelt proposed a plan in December 1940 called Lend-Lease. The President argued that "lending" or "leasing" war materials to those fighting the Nazis was a way to defeat Germany without direct U.S. military involvement. Instead, the U.S. would become the great "arsenal of democracy." He used a simple example to help the American people understand the need. If a neighbor's house is on fire, it would make sense to lend him a garden hose to prevent the fire from spreading to your own house. After the fire was out, your neighbor would return the hose or replace it. The message was clear: If Britain's house burns, America's house could be scorched as well! Congress passed the Lend-Lease Act in March 1941. The law enabled the British to buy war goods on credit. Congress funded the building of more shipyards and factories to offset the drain on war materials. General Marshall supported the Lend-Lease plan, not only because Britain needed the help, but also because those new factories might be useful to the United States at a later date. With the defense plants up and running, they could easily shift to supplying an American army for war.

Just as America's production levels were rising to meet Britain's needs while helping the U.S. Army rebuild its forces, another player entered the war. In June 1941, Hitler invaded Russia. Ed Cray described the beginning of Operation Barbarossa: "Three million troops, led by over 3,500 tanks, surged across the Polish border in a three-pronged attack aimed at Leningrad, Moscow, and Kiev. The greatest military assault in history came as a bolt of lightning . . . . It stunned Marshal Joseph Stalin, who had chosen to ignore repeated . . . warnings that Hitler intended to violate their non-aggression pact." Within the first two weeks, the German Army overran surprised Soviet defenders along a front that stretched from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Soviet losses were staggering. Stalin turned to the United States for help. Swallowing their distaste for communism, the Americans agreed to rearm Russia under the Lend-Lease program. As for the British, Winston Churchill "marched into the House of Commons and declared that he would come to the aid of the Devil himself if only the Devil would fight Hitler."[27] The Allies

were overjoyed at Russia's entry into the war. However, once again, supply priorities shifted, and Marshall's preparedness plans for the U.S. Army had to take a back seat.

By the time Germany invaded the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941, the U.S. had been drawn deeper and deeper into the European war. Naval ships of the U.S. fleet had begun to convoy British ships carrying war supplies to England. That fall, 115 sailors died aboard the destroyer *Reuben James*, sunk by a German U-boat. Even before Germany invaded Russia, General Marshall had attended the first of many conferences with Prime Minister Churchill and President Roosevelt. They met secretly on board a ship anchored off the coast of Newfoundland for the Atlantic Conference. Though Roosevelt made no specific military commitments to Churchill, both signed the Atlantic Charter, setting forth certain principles "on which to base a better future for the world." It was this charter that would provide the basis for the United Nations formed at the end of the war. It seemed clear that America was on the brink of war. Roosevelt was convinced that public opinion would support a declaration of war, but only if the United States was attacked. That attack would come, not in the Atlantic, but in the Pacific.

Japan had not sat idly by while the war in Europe raged. With Great Britain defending itself against Germany, and the Soviets under attack in the East, Japan seized the opportunity to expand its empire. Japan had signed a defensive alliance with Germany and Italy in September 1940. To many it appeared that Germany and Italy aimed to conquer Europe, while Japan ranged over Asia. General Marshall was well aware of the Japanese threat. All through the last half of 1941, it was common knowledge in Washington military and political circles that Japan and the United States were on a collision course. Roosevelt had already moved the U.S. Pacific Fleet into its naval base at Pearl Harbor, in Hawaii. It was the best defended installation in all U.S. overseas territories. Surely, the fleet's presence there would seem like a warning to the Japanese. Furthermore, General Marshall called General Douglas MacArthur out of retirement and made him commander in chief of the combined U.S. and Philippine troops stationed in the islands. MacArthur was allocated $10 million in funds to beef up Philippine defenses. Marshall hoped that the steps taken would give the United States the needed time to prepare troops for possible military action from the Japanese.

In response to Japanese aggression in Asia, the United States in 1939 ended a commercial treaty with Japan that had been in place since 1911. In July 1941, Japan moved into Indochina (now Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam). President Roosevelt took steps to deprive this industrialized, island nation of materials needed to supply its military interests. With few natural resources, Japan imported almost all of its raw materials. If shipments were delayed or blocked, Japan would quickly have serious trouble. Roosevelt told the Japanese that if they continued their aggressive behavior, the United States would freeze their financial assets and block the shipment of oil, iron, steel, and other resources they needed. When the president received no response from Japan, he did just that. Soon, Japan's chief oil supplier, the Netherlands East Indies froze Japanese assets as well. Since almost every drum of gas and oil had to be imported to Japan, they were in a crisis of their own making.

General Marshall explains a strategic point to his staff in his office at the War Department, November 1941.

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One last effort at negotiation was made. In August 1941, the Japanese prime minister, Konoye, a moderate, requested a personal meeting with Roosevelt. The American secretary of state, Cordell Hull, insisted that the president refuse to meet with the prime minister unless Konoye guaranteed that Japan would leave China. In his reply to Konoye, Roosevelt made the China question the key to negotiations. The Japanese would not accept that condition. Hull's advice to Roosevelt, and Japan's refusal to consider getting out of China, put an end to any diplomatic solution to the differences between these countries.

General Marshall had hoped that Secretary of State Cordell Hull would make a temporary diplomatic agreement with Japan so the Army could complete its buildup. However, to Secretary of State Hull and the President, allowing Japan to continue in China would be appeasement, or giving in, as the British and French had done with Hitler and the Sudetenland. They rejected the bid for a meeting. Konoye went back to Japan, where Japanese militants replaced him with the leader of the war party, General Hideki Tojo. For a few weeks, Tojo's government made moves toward negotiating through their diplomats, Nomura and Kurusu. But there was to be no yielding on the China question. Tojo was simply buying time as he put the finishing touches on an attack. Diplomatic bungling at the Japanese embassy in Washington, meant that the message to Hull, breaking off diplomatic relations with the United States, was not delivered to the secretary of state's office until he had already been informed of the Japanese attack on the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor. The treachery of the act would rally the American population to war.

General Marshall was well aware that something was about to happen in the Pacific because the U.S. Army had broken the highest level Japanese diplomatic code. They were reading daily communications between Japanese diplomats in Washington and Tokyo. On Thursday, November 27, Marshall was out of town, observing army maneuvers in North Carolina. The messages that Secretary of War Stimson was reading made it clear that diplomatic relations would soon be broken between Japan and the United States. Roosevelt confirmed Stimson's fears when they talked that morning. Stimson decided to send an alert to MacArthur in the Philippines. The communication had been written that morning by Marshall before he left. Stimson rephrased it slightly. In part, it said,

> *Negotiations with Japan appear to be terminated to all practical purposes . . . . Japanese future action unpredictable but hostile action possible at any moment.*
>
> *If hostilities cannot . . . be avoided, the United States desires that Japan commit the first overt act. This policy should not . . . [restrict] you to a course of action that might jeopardize your defense.*

Stimson decided to send the same message to San Francisco, to Panama, and to General Short in Hawaii. Their messages, though, had an additional sentence:

> *Prior to hostile Japanese action you are directed to take . . . measures as you deem necessary but these measures should be carried out so as not repeat not to alarm civil populations to disclose intent.*[28]

Apparently Stimson added this sentence because he had not wanted the large Japanese civilian population in Hawaii to say that our military moves provoked a Japanese attack. Whether or not the added words caused the commanders in Hawaii to soften their actions, is still debated.

By the morning of December 7, 1941, decoded Japanese messages made it clear that diplomatic relations most likely would be broken with the United States at 1:00 p.m., Washington time. General Marshall, who was riding horseback along the Potomac that Sunday morning, arrived back at his Fort Myer home about 10:30 a.m. with an urgent message awaiting him. He was in his office by 11:00 reading the last, lengthy intercept from the Japanese. Understanding its importance, he dispatched a message to the Philippines, Hawaii, and Panama:

> *The Japanese are presenting at 1 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, today, what amounts to an ultimatum. Also, they are under orders to destroy their code machine immediately. Just what significance the hour set may have we do not know, but be on the alert accordingly.*

Unfortunately, through an amazing array of miscommunications and technical difficulties, that telegram was not delivered to General Short until hours after the first waves of Japanese bombers had circled away from the smoking ruins of the American fleet and back out to sea.[29]

At 7:55 a.m., December 7, 1941, Japanese bombers made their first run over Pearl Harbor, "raining their lethal cargo onto the eighty-six naval vessels anchored below. At the same time the tightly packed airplanes of the Army Air Force were struck, strafed and bombed by carrier-borne attackers."[30] Two hours after the attack ended, the Japanese had won a clear victory. They had sunk or badly damaged 18 U.S. ships, including eight battleships, but had themselves suffered the loss of only 29 planes. They destroyed 180 planes on the ground. Twenty-four hundred U.S. sailors, marines and soldiers, plus 68 civilians had been killed, including 1,000 Americans aboard the sunken battleship, *Arizona*. Luckily, all three of the Pacific fleet's aircraft carriers and seven of its heavy cruisers were out to sea and spared. Also, the oil storage tanks and maintenance facilities were missed. These resources would be used by the surviving ships of the fleet.[31]

On December 8, President Roosevelt addressed a somber joint session of Congress. In a speech asking for a declaration of war, he stated: "Yesterday, December 7, 1941—a date that will live in infamy—the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan." War was declared unanimously, with the exception of one lone vote in the House of Representatives. One senator, Burton Wheeler, who had been one of the most vocal isolationists, had changed his tune: "The only thing to do now, is to lick the hell out of them."[32] On December 11, Germany and Italy, as members of the Axis, supported their partner, Japan, by declaring war on the United States. The debate was over. America was at war.

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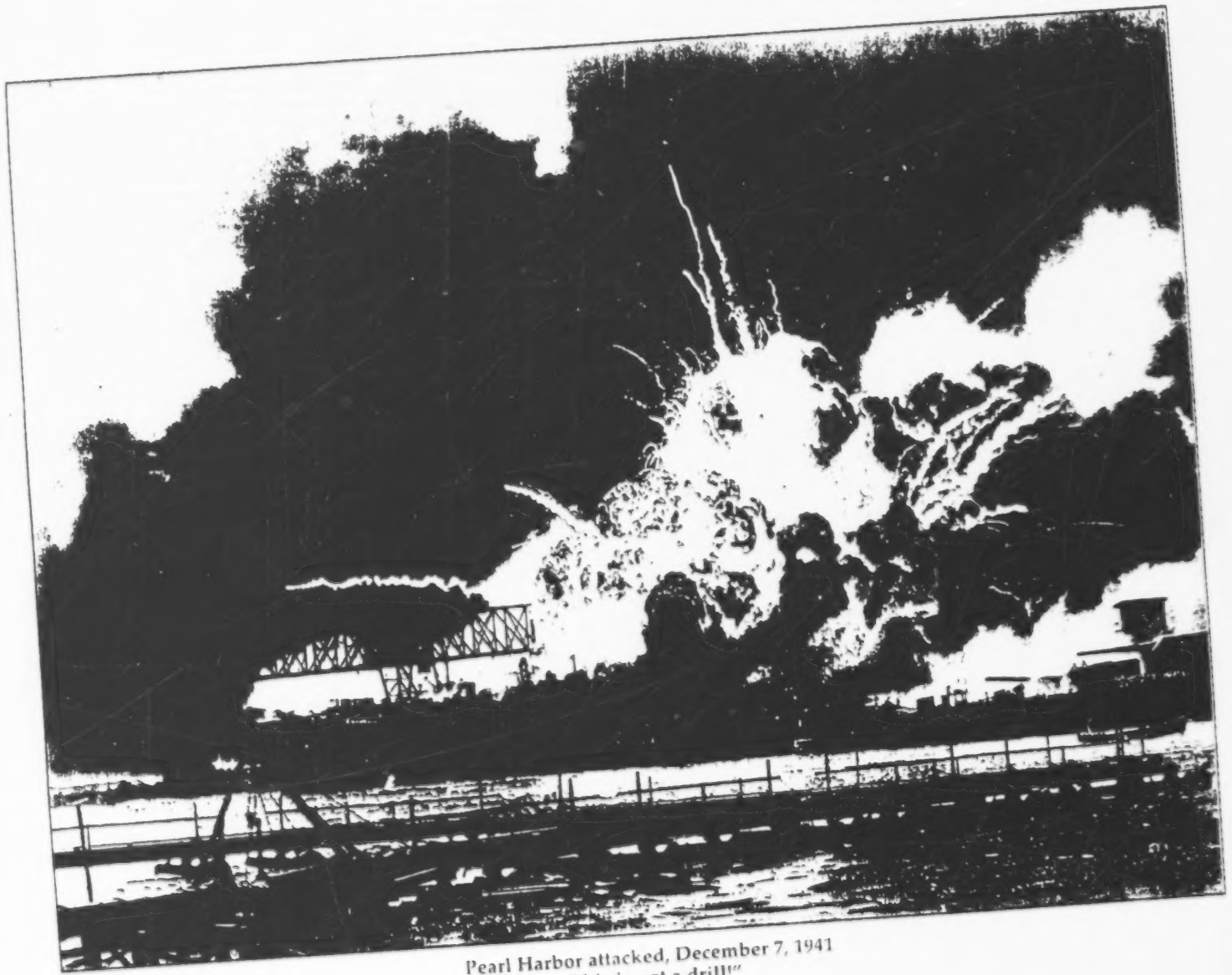

Pearl Harbor attacked, December 7, 1941
"This is not a drill!"

Chapter 7

Army Chief of Staff — War Duty in Washington

1942-1945

For every American, the news in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor was bleak. Ten hours after the strike at Pearl Harbor, Japanese planes attacked the Philippines. Three days later Guam, an American possession, fell to Japan; then Wake Island and Hong Kong. The great British fortress of Singapore in Malaya surrendered in February 1942, the Dutch East Indies in March, Burma in April. Only the Philippines held out, thanks to the valiant efforts of General Douglas MacArthur and his exhausted Filipino and American troops.[33] This was the grim circumstance that the army chief of staff faced in early 1942. "Licking the hell" out of America's enemies would not be that easy. And George C. Marshall also faced a general's worst fear: a two-front war.

General Marshall's most immediate problem was the Philippines. To get crucial supplies to MacArthur's troops, he offered huge amounts of cash to skippers willing to risk the Japanese ships. He even used submarines to ship anti-aircraft shells. But it was not going to be enough. For all practical purposes, at this early stage of the war, MacArthur was on his own. He was ready to fight to the last man, but Marshall ordered him to escape to Australia, where he could lay the groundwork for a future battle. A reluctant MacArthur left with his wife and child aboard a torpedo boat, promising, "I shall return." General Jonathan Wainwright was left in command of the remaining troops. American and Filipino troops defended the Bataan Peninsula until April 7. Wainwright then made his way to Corregidor, where he held out with 13,000 defenders, until May 7, before surrendering. Seventy-five thousand captured American prisoners were marched 55 miles to the railroad that took them to a prisoner of war camp, a journey that was later called the "Bataan Death March." MacArthur would make good on his promise to return, but it would take a while.

Back in Washington, Marshall gathered with those sharing the enormous responsibilities of this war, especially Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson. Marshall would have not only a working relationship with Stimson but a friendship as well. Admiral William Leahy was chosen by Roosevelt to head the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Other joint chiefs were Admiral Ernest J. King, commander of the U.S. Navy; General Henry "Hap" Arnold, commander of the Army Air Corps; and, of course, General Marshall as the commander of the army. Marshall and the others faced the most complicated task imaginable. Never before had a war been fought on so many fronts. The battlefield was the world, and organizing and coordinating these far-flung operations was an almost impossible task. There were not only enormous military problems to solve, but political ones as well. Competition has always existed between the services: to understand this, all you had to do was see the Army-Navy football game. But what about *countries* sharing power in waging a war?

A shortage of merchant ships was one of George C. Marshall's biggest problems during World War II. You can see from the thousands of miles the United States had to move its soldiers and supplies some of the problems a leader like General Marshall faced.

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Whose priorities would receive the attention; how would the collective money be spent? Which battles would be fought first? How could we commit all of our resources to Europe, when American prisoners longed for freedom in Japanese prison camps? When battle plans were made, whose generals would lead the army?

Throughout World War II, General George C. Marshall was at the very heart of solving these problems. He would be primarily responsible for the smooth operation of the British-American alliance. He would also play a key role in developing and promoting the strategic concept leading to an Allied victory against Germany, the Normandy Invasion. In just two years, 1942-1943, he participated in 11 international conferences. During those conferences he negotiated with every major political and military leader of the Alliance, including Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin. What he searched for most vigorously in the two years after Pearl Harbor, was a way to develop a unified global strategy for the United States and its allies.[34]

In December 1941, Prime Minister Churchill and President Roosevelt gathered their cabinet officers and military advisors in Washington for the Arcadia Conference. The British had come to the capital because they were deeply worried about how the bombing of Pearl Harbor would affect the commitment of the U.S. president and military chiefs to a "Europe first" strategy. Churchill was greatly relieved to know that the Americans had not changed their mind on this point. General Marshall, as he listened to Churchill's concerns, understood all too well that Europe should get first priority. America simply could not fight an all-out two-front war. Even though troops in the Pacific would suffer many casualties and deaths while they awaited reinforcements and supplies, the conduct of the war in the larger picture demanded that Marshall focus on Europe.[35]

One of Marshall's tasks would be to turn America into a great arsenal for the Allied cause. It would not be easy. Marshall had to recruit, equip, train, and support several million men and women. Also, he had to talk with industrialists and convince them to convert their industries to wartime production, asking them to make uniforms instead of stylish suits, tanks instead of automobiles. He was in the business of convincing people at every turn. Build this, expand that, provide money for the army's needs. By next year? No, now! Push, push, push! He had to anger some career officers, too, because the Army needed restructuring. Some of the commanders were too old for the kind of war duty that officers would soon face. Others would be overly cautious because they were too interested in protecting themselves. Mercilessly, Marshall replaced the officers he thought ineffective with younger, more energetic men. Some of those he retired had been Marshall's friends. In private he expressed regret that he had to do this, but the United States was at war, and winning that war took priority.

Yet Marshall felt the strain of the job. Every evening, after arriving home at Fort Myer, he and Katherine would walk along the streets of Arlington, Virginia. Katherine remembers that her husband would talk, talk, and talk. She said little on the walks back through darkened neighborhoods to Quarters #1. Katherine once

commented, "I had the feeling he was talking to himself . . . . It was as though George Marshall was someone he was constantly appraising . . . and training to meet a situation." He confided to her, "I cannot afford the luxury of sentiment, mine must be cold logic." Though in public his decisions seemed made with complete confidence, he once told his wife, "I get so tired of saying 'No,' it takes it out of me. I am really thankful when I can say 'Yes' . . . . It is not easy to tell men where they failed . . . . My days seem . . . filled with situations . . . where I must do . . . the hard thing."

One situation he had tried to correct was the fierce competition between the services. He would later say that the rivalry between these service commands was its own "vicious little war." But since becoming army chief of staff he had insisted on the importance of the U.S. Army and Navy cooperating rather than competing. Now, as the British and Americans began to combine their military efforts, he could see an added layer of conflict. During the Arcadia Conference he tackled this problem, introducing a concept he called "unity of command." He proposed that the ground, naval, and air forces of *all* the Allied powers in a particular theater of war be placed under a single commander. When Churchill protested, asking what an army officer could know about handling a ship, Marshall answered: "What the devil does a naval officer know about handling a tank?" The point was to get unified control of the Allied armed forces so they could plan logically to defeat a common enemy. Marshall's forcefulness in presenting a position he firmly believed in came through, because the British agreed to the concept. In addition, he also got approval for a unified war council that would give orders to these theater commanders. Called the Combined Chiefs of Staff, it directed British-American strategy, and allowed the Allies to closely cooperate on military matters. It didn't always work perfectly, arguments were often heated among the combined chiefs, but in the end it led to the development of a unified strategy that would result in victory.

By March 1942, General Marshall was firming up another concept that would eventually have an enormous effect on the outcome of the war. He wanted to consolidate the allied armies, and use this mighty force to deliver a single fatal blow to the Germans. The plan was simple: build a huge U.S. army, ship it to England, coordinate with British forces to cross the English Channel, and invade France. Once a beachhead was established there, the Allies could then begin the process of liberating France and the rest of Western Europe from the clutches of the Nazis.[36] With that accomplished, transport the now well-trained, seasoned troops to the Pacific and throw all efforts toward defeating the Japanese. By April 1, Marshall had persuaded the president on the merit of this cross-channel plan. Roosevelt gave Marshall permission to take the plan to London and win British agreement.

Arriving in London, Marshall was met by Churchill and his chiefs of staff. At a meeting on April 9, he presented his plan for a build-up of British-American forces in Great Britain, code-named Bolero, and a cross-channel invasion in 1943, code-named Roundup. By the end of the London meetings, Churchill had seemed very accepting of the idea, and Marshall believed he "had cordially accepted the plan."

Moreover, General Marshall had a fair amount of time to get to know Churchill during his two-week stay in England, and was forming the opinion that the prime minister was a statesman who could be taken at his word. Yet in June 1942, with Churchill back in Washington, supposedly to discuss landing craft programs for the cross-channel operation, he and his military staff seemed to have turned their backs on the whole idea. Marshall was genuinely shocked. What he did not realize was that when the British had seemed to show their approval for his plan, especially Roundup, they were doing it for another reason. They were worried that if they rejected it outright, it would lead the United States to turn to the Pacific. Marshall did not yet fully understand the awesome interests that had to be resolved before agreement could be reached.

During the general's two-week absence in London, Katherine planned a surprise for her husband, perhaps one that would ease the strain he had been under in the first months of America's entry into the war. The previous year, the Marshalls bought a home in Leesburg, Virginia, about thirty-five miles from Washington, D.C. The residence, which they named Dodona Manor, had been built before the Civil War and remodeled in the 1930s. Since Marshall had been thrust into the crisis of war, they hadn't been able to go there often. Just as soon as her husband left for the London conference with Churchill, Katherine went to work! She hired building contractors, bricklayers, and yardmen to transform an overgrown property into a beautiful place. The workmen built a two-car garage, a tool shed, and brick walkways to accent a newly groomed lawn. Upon his return after two weeks, Katherine greeted her husband at the airport and waited while he finished paperwork at his office. They drove to Leesburg on winding country roads on a beautiful spring evening. It was sunset when they pulled into the circular driveway in front of the house. The grounds looked beautiful, with spring flowers in bloom, and the grass a bright spring green. Katherine gave him a tour, pointing out each improvement as she went. Marshall was delighted. He had lived on army posts all of his adult life, and this was the first home he had ever owned. His voice got husky as he said, "This is home after 41 years of wandering." Throughout the war, when he could, he stole away from Washington for a few hours or a day to work in the vegetable garden he had planted there.

In addition to the promise of a rare enjoyable weekend at Dodona, that June, General Marshall saw the first glimmer of hope from the Pacific Theater. The Pacific island of Midway was still held by U.S. forces, and three aircraft carriers remained intact, having been out to sea during the attack on Pearl Harbor. The Japanese planned to destroy what was left of the American fleet by invading Midway. If they succeeded, they would offer peace terms. Japan would then have a free hand to build its so-called "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere." Fortunately for the United States, MAGIC code-breakers learned of the plan. Though the Americans lost one carrier, navy dive-bombers sank four Japanese carriers.[37] The battle proved to be a turning point, though it could have gone the other way. Its outcome was the product of Japanese overconfidence as well as good American intelligence-gathering. Though the war was far from won, the Japanese would strike no more knockout blows in the Pacific.

In Britain, Churchill's main concern at the moment was not the Pacific. What he wanted from the Allies in spring 1942 was an invasion of North Africa, to relieve British troops there who were being battered by the Germans. The British had been fighting Italian forces in North Africa since 1940. Mussolini had hoped to use the Italian colony of Libya as a base from which to capture Egypt and the Suez Canal. British troops stationed in Egypt had successfully pushed them deep into Libya. The battle picture changed, however, when Hitler sent German reinforcements to help the Italians. Fighting Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's "Afrika Korps" was more difficult than fighting the weaker Italian troops. Germans forces soon turned the tide of battle, and it looked as if they would capture the strategically important Suez Canal. Churchill convinced Roosevelt that establishing a strong base in North Africa and aiding the British troops there was more important than beginning the invasion of mainland Europe. Marshall did not like the plan, but carried out the orders of his commander in chief. He directed General Dwight D. Eisenhower to take overall command of the American-led invasion of North Africa, Operation Torch.

While the United States was preparing for this invasion, British troops received reinforcements and a new commander, Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery. The British began pushing the Germans back. By the time American troops landed in Morocco and Algiers on November 8, 1942, the Germans had been driven out of Egypt and Libya to the French-controlled nation of Tunisia. Many of these same German forces inflicted a serious defeat on inexperienced American troops at the Kasserine Pass in Tunisia. It was General George S. Patton who regrouped the soldiers and began a counteroffensive. With the help of Allied air and naval power and attacking British forces from the East, the Germans were driven from Africa by May 1943.

Though 1942 was a gloomy year for the Allies, by the beginning of 1943, the tide was beginning to turn. Its first hint was in the Pacific for the United States had seen a victory at Midway the previous June, and the Pacific fleet was now on the offensive; British and American troops were beginning to drive back German forces in North Africa; and the Soviets had forced the surrender of the German Sixth Army in Stalingrad. Perhaps this Soviet success meant that cross-channel operations, and victory in Europe, were possible in 1943.

From the outset, Marshall had differed with Churchill on the major strategy for fighting in Europe. Coming from a small island nation, Britain had always depended on her overseas empire for supplies and markets. In part, to protect these markets, Churchill favored fighting a war on several small fronts, especially in the Mediterranean. It wasn't lost on Marshall that the prime minister's approach also helped preserve the British empire. General Marshall had always favored the "singular effect," a bold thrust. Even if unprepared, the U.S. had the resources and manpower capability to eventually launch such an attack. Throughout the early part of the war, Churchill had managed to divert attention from the cross-channel invasion. Despite Marshall's intentions, the Americans seemed to find themselves drawn into Churchill's Mediterranean strategy. Marshall called it the "suction pump" effect: Start with a small successful invasion in a region, then follow it with

another, and still another. Now, at the Casablanca Conference (January 1943) in Morocco, Churchill was at it again. Once Patton and Montgomery had driven Rommel out of North Africa, Churchill wanted an invasion of Sicily, and he got it.

Marshall had grave concerns about the delay of the cross-channel invasion, now renamed Operation Overlord. He worried that if the European invasion the Allies had promised since the beginning of the war did not take place, the Soviets might simply cut their own deal with the Germans. After all, the Soviets were beginning to push the Germans out of Russia. What was to prevent them from signing a separate peace as they had done in World War I? Such an action would be disastrous, because Germany would only have to fight on one front. The Allies would then bear the full brunt of Hitler's massive war machine. Moreover, if the Soviets got too angry, they might refuse to help the Allies fight Japan after Germany was defeated. The Allies could not allow this to happen. General Marshall came to understand, though, that the events of 1942 had so scattered U.S. forces in the Mediterranean and the Pacific that, realistically, the invasion of France could not take place until 1944. But he was determined to get a firm commitment from the British that allowed no further delay.

General Marshall realized that to win an argument with the British, and especially Churchill, the Americans had to be extremely well prepared and unified in their presentations at these strategic planning meetings. Early in the war, he noticed that when the British came to planning meetings, they had a detailed plan. If there were arguments among their joint chiefs on the strategy presented, it had been settled before the British arrived to talk to the Americans. Marshall had always believed in this idea, but he realized his own president and joint chiefs were not doing this very thing. He learned a lesson.[38]

In early 1943, Marshall made sure he had solid support from both the president and the Joint Chiefs of Staff before presenting the cross-channel plans again. He worked hard to eliminate differences that might come up, such as how the United States would use its army, navy, and air power. Unifying American leadership was an important first step in unifying the entire Allied command. The results showed at the Trident Conference held in Washington in the spring of 1943. When the British pressed for further action in the Mediterranean to knock Italy out of the war, the United States took a firm position. Yes, it would agree, but only if the action did not interfere with the tentative May 1, 1944, date for Operation Overlord. Furthermore, Marshall presented a highly-organized detailed plan for Overlord, again backed fully by the president and the joint chiefs. With Roosevelt committed, he, too, was less likely to waffle when Churchill used his persuasive abilities to lobby for alternative military actions in the Mediterranean. With the U.S. naval commander, Admiral King, in agreement, the ever-competing U.S. Pacific interests would not muddy the waters of the discussion.

That fall, still not ready to give up on his strategy, Prime Minister Winston Churchill launched another debate about postponing Overlord. He wanted to keep landing craft and troops in Italy. He was pushing for a two-way thrust into the Balkans, one through Italy, and the other through Greece and Turkey.

President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill at the Trident Conference with their staff members, May 28, 1943. George C. Marshall is standing third from the right between Admiral William D. Leahy and Admiral Ernest J. King.

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Churchill implied that if the British-American forces didn't do that, maybe the Soviets would move into those territories instead. Marshall considered it a variation of Churchill's usual "pinprick" strategy. This time the president wasn't swayed by Churchill. Now firmly committed to Overlord, Roosevelt refused to even discuss it with the prime minister until all three Allies (the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union) met in Tehran, Iran at a meeting scheduled for late November 1943.

In Tehran, the Soviet leader, Joseph Stalin, was asked what approach he favored. Should the Allies take immediate action in Italy and delay Overlord? Or should Overlord start on time with only limited action in Italy? Since the Soviet leader had begged for a "second front" in Europe since the beginning, his answer would not be a surprise. He came down solidly in favor of starting Overlord on schedule. After endless discussion, Roosevelt and Churchill agreed on a three-point plan. The Italian campaign would press north of Rome, to weaken German forces fighting there. A main invasion force would land in Normandy on the coast of France in May 1944. At the same time, troops would land in southern France to eventually support the invasion of Europe.

By the end of the conference, even Churchill had rallied to the cross-channel invasion. It wouldn't be the last time he would bring up his Mediterranean campaign, but for the moment he was convinced. He later said, "There I sat, with the great Russian bear on one side of me, with paws outstretched, and on the other side the great American buffalo, and between the two sat the poor little English donkey who was the only one who knew the right way home."[39] Not only would the "Russian bear" support Overlord, but Stalin also promised to attack Germany from the East as a diversion during the Normandy landings. He also pledged to help the Allies defeat Japan in the Pacific. Finally, after 90 separate meetings on the subject, Overlord was to be launched. As Marshall had always envisioned, it would form the basis of a coordinated, worldwide Allied strategy for the rest of the war.

At the end of the Tehran meeting, one crucial decision remained. Who would command Operation Overlord? It would be Roosevelt's decision to make, since the United States was commiting the largest invasion force. Stalin was concerned that this had not been done. How could planning proceed if no leader had been chosen? President Roosevelt had promised Stalin and Churchill that the decision would be made within two weeks. Many believed it would be General George C. Marshall, since Operation Overlord was his brainchild, and he had performed brilliantly as army chief of staff. All who knew him recognized that field command had always been his first choice. Still, some people considered it a demotion since he would be commanding only one theater of action. Others pointed out that the war in Europe would soon be over, and Marshall would be needed to guide the war in the Pacific. When he learned Marshall was being considered for this post, General John J. Pershing wrote to President Roosevelt, telling him that Marshall was vitally needed in Washington and no one else was capable of filling his shoes. Roosevelt replied that he understood his point of view, but he wanted Marshall to have an opportunity to be "the Pershing of World War II."

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Perhaps the views expressed by civilian and military officials that Marshall must stay in Washington began to weigh on Roosevelt. In his heart, he knew Marshall deserved the command. Yet, reports from all sides were making him think that most likely Marshall could not be spared. He decided he would ask the general's opinion. Early in December 1943, Marshall and Roosevelt were taking part in post-Tehran talks in Cairo when the president finally called Marshall to a meeting. The President asked him point-blank which position he preferred. Marshall was to tell his biographer, Forest Pogue: "I just repeated again in as convincing language as I could that I wanted him to feel free to act in whatever way he felt was to the best interest of the country and to his satisfaction and not in any way to consider my feeling. I would cheerfully go whatever way he wanted me to go." Just like that, the decision was made. Marshall would stay in Washington, and General Dwight D. Eisenhower would become the supreme allied commander in Europe. Softening the blow, Roosevelt told Marshall, "You know I do not think I could sleep well at night with you out of the country." Marshall's disappointment was huge. Placing his sense of duty above personal wishes had cost him the command he had most wanted.[40] But, with great self-discipline, he said nothing, and set to work to make Eisenhower's job as easy as possible.

The Allied offensive on the Italian peninsula began on September 3, 1943. It would bring a great personal loss to George C. Marshall. Both of Marshall's stepsons had enlisted in the army when war began. Marshall was firm that he did not want them to receive special privileges because of his position. Though he wanted the best for them, he did not want anyone to say their achievements came because their stepfather was the army chief of staff. Whatever they earned, they could be sure, the credit belonged to them. After graduating from Officers Training School, Second Lieutenant Allen Tupper Brown was assigned to the First Armored Division as a tank commander. He was shipped to North Africa and then to Italy. He survived the fierce fighting at Anzio and Monte Cassino, but was shot by a single sniper's bullet on the road to Rome. He died May 29, 1944. For a while, George and Katherine Marshall were like hundreds of thousands of other parents in this war, grieving for a lost son. On June 4, 1944, while Allen's grave was still fresh in a cemetery in Anzio, Rome surrendered. It was just two days before D-Day. As Marshall made final preparation for the Normandy invasion, he was acutely aware of the human cost of war.

On June 6, 1944, the largest military invasion in history began. In the early-morning darkness, 13,000 American and British airborne troops were dropped by parachute or landed by glider at points along the coast of Normandy, in German-occupied France. Their mission was to capture key roads, towns, and bridges along that coast. From Britain, 4,000 transport ships, escorted by 600 warships, sailed across the English Channel. By nightfall the Allies had landed more than eight divisions, 175,000 men, on the beaches of Normandy, where they launched an assault against German fortifications strung along the coast. That force was bigger in size than the entire U.S. Army when Marshall took command in July 1939. Casualties for the first day: 9,500 killed, wounded or missing.[41]

General Marshall chats with General Dwight Eisenhower at Allied headquarters, June 3, 1943.

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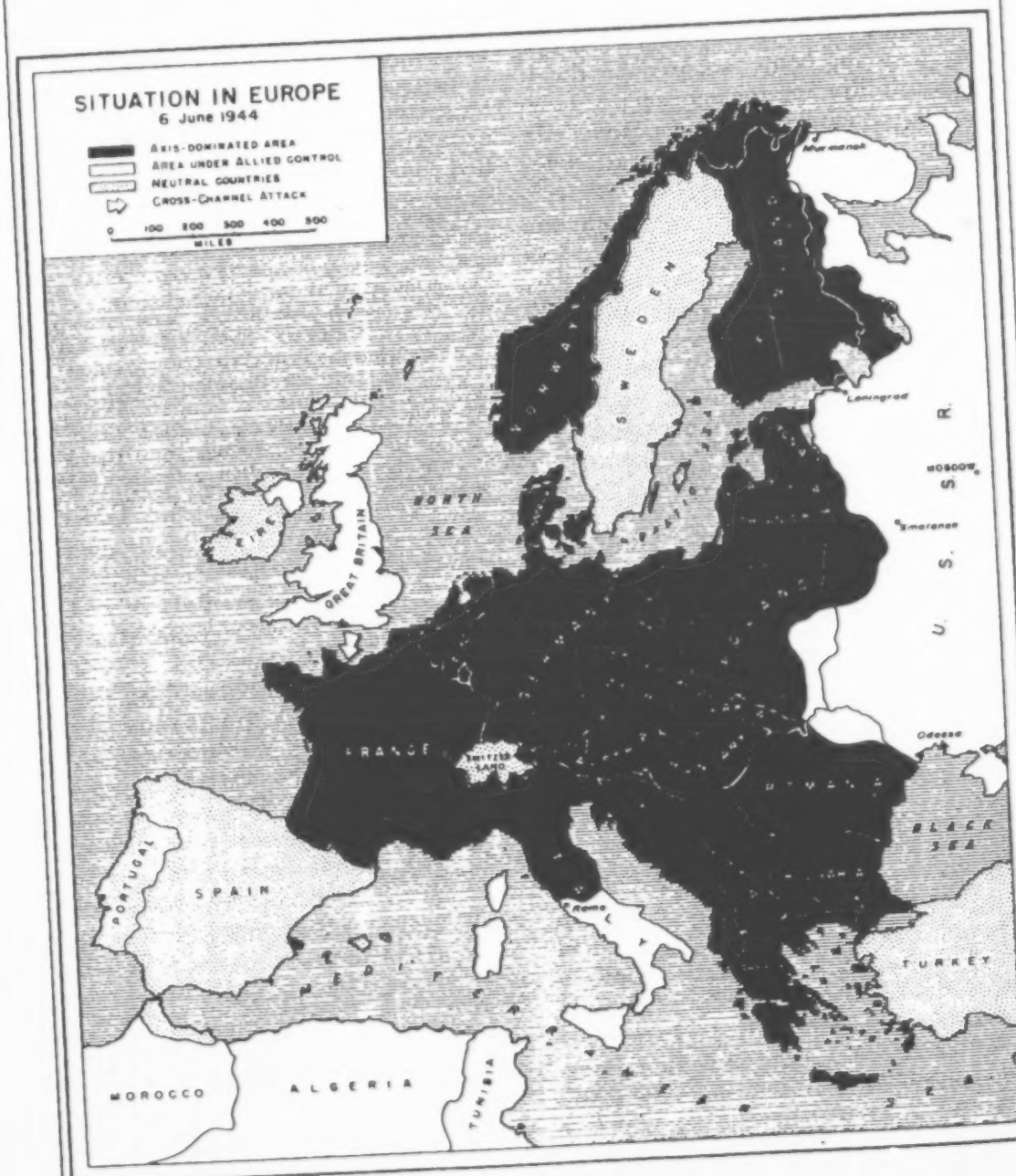

Europe, 1944

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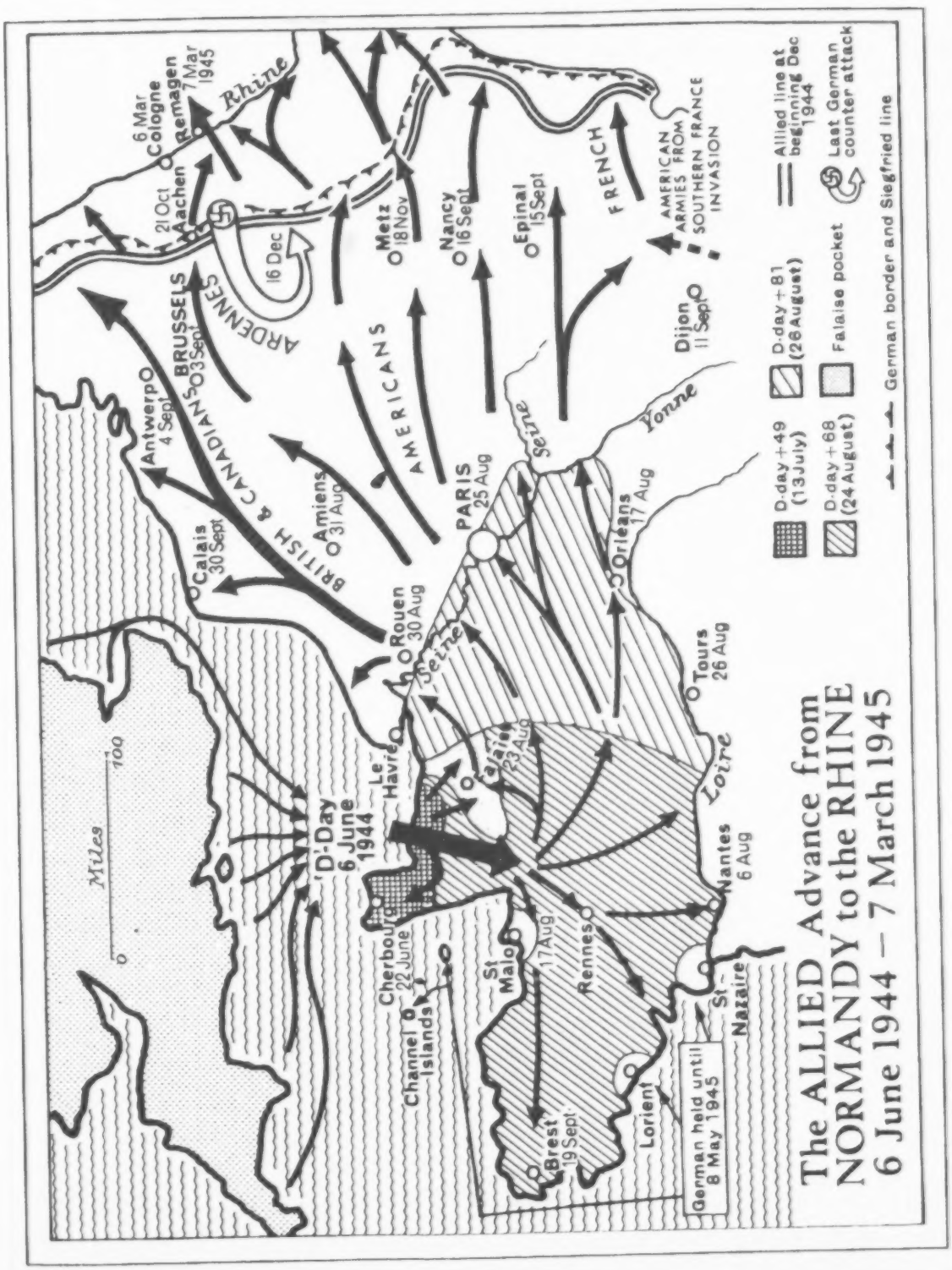

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Then, on July 10, 1944 Soviet forces crossed the Russian border from the east to begin their promised offensive. The Russian advance sweeping into Nazi-held Poland and Finland cost the Germans more than half a million casualties and destroyed 2,000 of their tanks. Allied invasion forces began pushing inland on July 25. By mid-August, the German troops were in full retreat. That December, the Allies were momentarily stopped in the Ardennes Forest of Belgium and Luxembourg in what became known as the Battle of the Bulge. But it was the last German offensive of the war. Finally, on March 7, 1945, Allied forces crossed the Rhine River and stepped onto German soil at Remagen. With the Allies closing in on all sides, the end came on April 30, 1945. Hitler committed suicide in Berlin. On May 7, 1945, Germany surrendered, and the war in Europe was over.[42]

One person whose energy and commitment had been a major factor in the defeat of Germany would not hear the news of victory in Europe. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who had been elected president four times, died of a cerebral hemorrhage in Warm Springs, Georgia, on April 12, 1945. The strain of leading the nation through both the Great Depression and a world war had taken its toll on Roosevelt. Though Marshall and FDR were not friends, they had forged a great mutual respect during the war years. Knowing that relationship, Mrs. Roosevelt asked General Marshall to make the funeral arrangements for this remarkable man. The common people of America mourned the passing of Franklin Roosevelt, lining the railroad tracks to pay their respects as the funeral train brought his body from Warm Springs to Washington, D.C. The next day, the man who had been president for more than 12 years was laid to rest at his estate in Hyde Park, New York. The new president, Harry S. Truman, unknown to many Americans, would have to finish the work of this great war with George C. Marshall.

On May 8, once Germany's defeat was accomplished, Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson called General Marshall to his office. When Marshall entered, 14 generals and high officials were seated around Stimson's desk in a semi-circle, in the center of which was a vacant chair set aside for Marshall. After Marshall was seated, Stimson asked all but Marshall to rise. The secretary turned to him and gave a moving tribute. Stimson showed deep admiration for Marshall's decision to continue as army chief of staff rather than accept command of the Normandy invasion to fulfill his personal ambition. Then he said to him, "I have seen a great many soldiers in my lifetime and you, Sir, are the finest soldier I have ever known."

Meanwhile, the war in the Pacific was not over, but the tide had long since turned in favor of the Allies. Admiral Chester Nimitz's forces won a series of victories in the Marshall Islands in February 1944, cracking the outer edges of Japan's empire. Before the month was out, the navy had plunged far within the circle to destroy other Japanese strongholds. Meanwhile, because American subs were severely damaging Japan's shipping capability, the Japanese economy was being crippled. Skimpy food rations were commonplace in Tokyo and other island cities. By October, General MacArthur was back in the Philippines. In the fierce battle of Leyte Gulf, the largest naval engagement in history, the Americans all but destroyed Japan's ability to continue a naval war. Yet the Japanese were not about to give up.

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General Marshall receives flowers from French children in 1944.

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In February, U.S. marines fought hard before gaining Iwo Jima, a valuable island for launching future air strikes against Japan. Iwo Jima cost the Americans 26,000 casualties, including 6,800 killed or missing. Of the more than 20,000 Japanese defending the island, most were killed; only 1,100 were taken prisoner. There were 75,000 American casualties on land and sea before the marines captured Okinawa in June 1945.[43] Of the Japanese who defended the island, 110,000 died, 90 percent of the garrison's troops.

The same kind of bitter fighting seemed to await the Americans if they invaded Japan. Moreover, it was hard to imagine the Japanese giving up. This seemed especially unlikely because of the "unconditional surrender" terms decided upon by the Big Three at the Casablanca Conference in early 1943. Unconditional surrender suggested that the emperor would not be recognized as Japan's sovereign ruler. It was unthinkable that the Japanese would agree to this. The possibility of invading Japan worried Marshall and other American military leaders for another reason as well. The United States did not look forward to bringing the Soviets into the Asian war, even though they might be needed. Marshall worried that if the Soviet Union took part, it would use that participation to press for political control of many areas in Asia that had been taken from the Japanese.

Then an alternative to the U.S. invasion of Japan presented itself. At the Potsdam Conference in Germany, in mid-July, 1945 President Truman heard that the United States had successfully tested the atomic bomb. The Manhattan Project, as the development of the atomic bomb was called, had been in the works since 1942. However, scientists on the project had not been certain the experiment to build the bomb would succeed in time to help end this war. Now, it was possible. Supposedly it was a weapon of such magnitude that, if used, it would force the immediate surrender of the Japanese. The Allies could scarcely realize the destructive force they held in their own hands. Yet now it was theirs to use.

Marshall and Stimson were in favor of using the bomb from the start. The alternative was an invasion of mainland Japan. Remembering the incredible determination of the Japanese before they surrendered Okinawa, Marshall feared that an invasion of the Japanese homeland would result in even more horrific casualties. Marshall's planners predicted there would be at least 250,000 American casualties if a two-stage assault on Japan was required. Nevertheless, Marshall suggested that the first bomb should be used on a purely military target. If that didn't work, manufacturing centers should be targeted only after the enemy warned its civilians to leave. That idea was overruled by President Truman. He did issue a vague warning to the Japanese on July 26, 1945. It was called the Potsdam Ultimatum and demanded an "unconditional surrender"of Japan or it would face the risk of "complete and utter destruction." The document said nothing about the status of the emperor. Truman believed the Japanese had been warned. The Japanese Cabinet, hopelessly divided between those who sought peace and those who wanted to continue the war, issued a statement that they meant to be interpreted as "no comment." U.S. translators read the response as "ignore."[44]

Some of the fifth Marine Division, Second Battalion, landing at Iwo Jima, February 19, 1945

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The first atomic bomb exploded on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. The destructive force could hardly have been imagined. It literally evaporated a four-square-mile area of the city, leaving 100,000 people dead. Tens of thousands more would die later from the effects of exposure to the radiation released from the bomb. Shortly after the dropping of the bomb, the Pentagon released a statement, saying of the Japanese, "If they do not now accept our terms they may expect a rain of ruin from the air, the like of which has never been seen on this earth." In Washington, the War Department awaited word of a surrender. It did not come.

On August 9, the decision was made to use the second bomb on the city of Nagasaki, which killed 40,000 Japanese. Many questioned why the second bomb was necessary. Marshall later said that he and Secretary of War Stimson came to believe that the shock of the first bomb had not been enough. The United States was determined to get a surrender, and Marshall hoped the move would lead the Japanese to think that Tokyo would be the next target. Yet years later, he said, "What we did not take into account was that the destruction would be so complete that it would be an appreciable time before the actual facts got to Tokyo . . . there was no communication for at least a day, maybe two."[45]

Finally on August 14, the Japanese ended the war. On September 2, 1945, General Douglas MacArthur accepted the surrender of the Japanese government. The ceremony marking the end of this great conflict took place in Tokyo Bay, aboard the battleship *Missouri*. MacArthur's remarks were brief: "It is my earnest hope and indeed the hope of all mankind that from this solemn occasion a better world shall emerge out of the blood and carnage of the past . . . a world dedicated to the dignity of man and the fulfillment of his most cherished wish—for freedom, tolerance, and justice."[46] The second great war of the 20th century was finally over.

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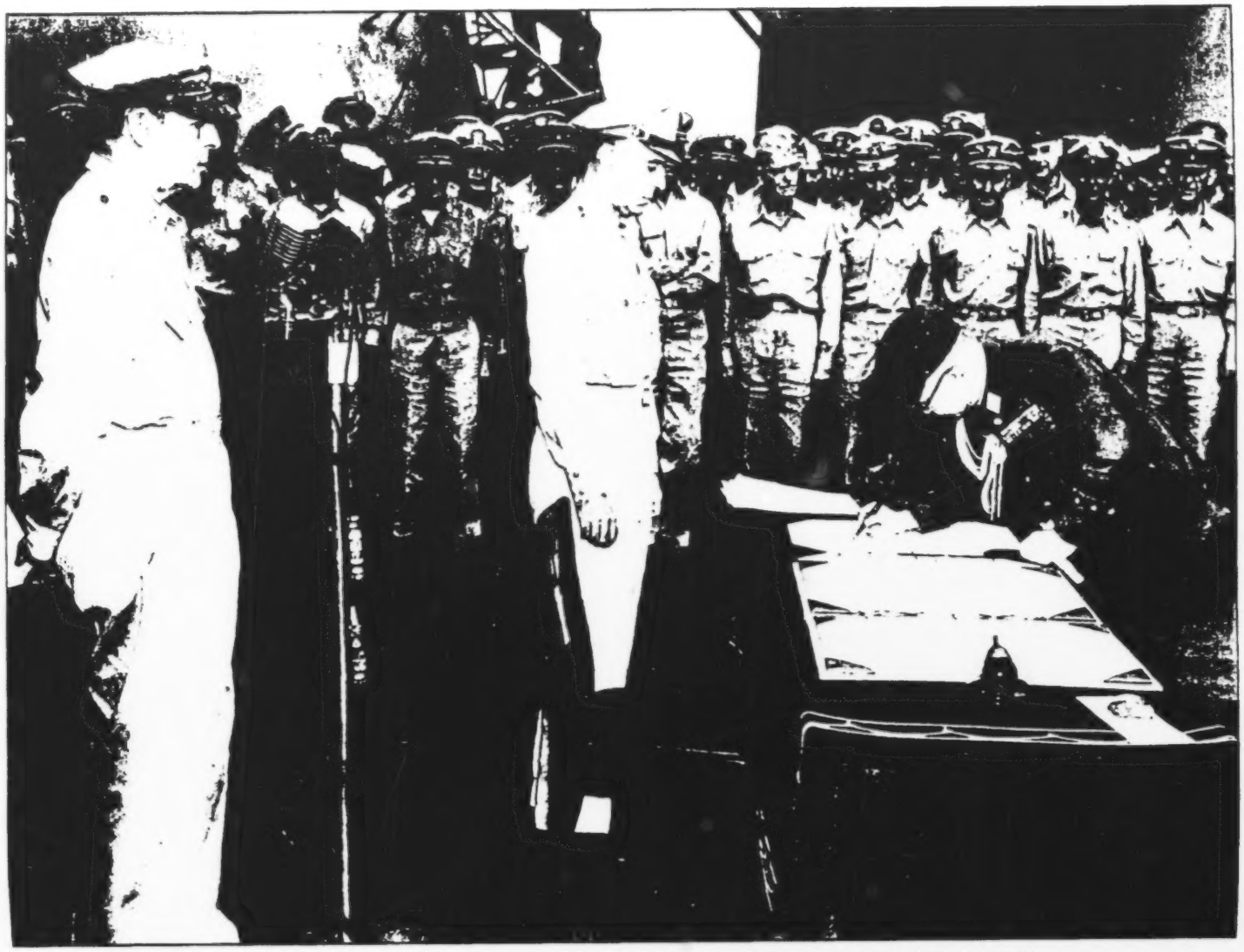

General Umezu signs the Japanese surrender as General Douglas MacArthur (far left) watches aboard the *USS Missouri*, August 14, 1945.

Chapter 8

The Statesman Years — From Ancient Land to the Marshall Plan

1945-1948

George and Katherine Marshall were headed for Dodona Manor and retirement. It was November 26, 1945, only one day after General Marshall had been released from duty as army chief of staff. In a moving ceremony, the president had called him "the greatest military man the nation ever produced." Truman had honored him for his service, awarding Marshall an oak leaf cluster to add to the Distinguished Service Cross he had received in World War I. As the Marshalls traveled along the road to Leesburg, they talked of future plans: They would take long, leisurely trips to Florida, visit with family. Maybe he would go pheasant hunting near their winter cottage in Pinehurst, North Carolina. As they entered the house, the phone rang. It was the White House switchboard operator: "President Truman on the line," she said. Without so much as a "hello," the president said, "General, I want you to go to China for me." Marshall's retirement would be one of the shortest in history, for he was to become a special presidential envoy. His mission was to negotiate a settlement between China's two warring forces. For Katherine Marshall, this assignment was a "bitter blow." As Marshall told President Truman, "There was the devil to pay." On many fronts, the month before General Marshall left for China would not be easy.

In early December 1945, Congress was investigating why the Japanese had succeeded in their 1941 surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. General Marshall testified before a congressional committee for almost two weeks, explaining the military judgments he made in the days leading up to that famous day of December 7. Two senators in particular advanced a theory that President Roosevelt had the military withhold information of the coming attack on Pearl Harbor, hoping to draw an isolationist nation into the war. The two senators tried to link Marshall to this plot. When the testimony was over, the majority report concluded that no person, including the president, had deliberately ignored warnings of an attack to gain the emotional impact of a "sneak attack."

In fact, the committee cleared those in Washington, including the president and the secretaries of state, war, and navy. The committee also reported that while the officers in Hawaii failed to properly heed Washington's warnings of the coming attack, it was an error in judgment, not gross neglect of duty. For not realizing that General Short, at Pearl Harbor, had not put the island on full alert, the War Department was criticized. The War Plans Division was reprimanded as well for failing to see the full significance of a series of MAGIC intercepts that might have tipped them off that Pearl was the target. Marshall accepted responsibility for both of these lapses. Yet, as Alan Saunders notes, "On his last day of testimony, a tired but proud Marshall left the Senate Caucus Room—and the audience, more perceptive than the committee about what the nation owed this man, stood up and applauded him as he exited." Nevertheless, the hearings made Marshall very

weary, leaving him short on time to prepare for what would prove to be a grueling China mission.

Only five days before Christmas 1945, Marshall's plane landed on an airfield in Shanghai, China. The spitting snow, blowing around Shanghai's war-torn streets, foretold the gloomy outcome of the work he had been sent to accomplish. In fact, Marshall had been asked to accept a "mission impossible." Now that Japan had been defeated, a great power vacuum existed in China. The possibility that the Soviets would move to fill the vacuum was worrisome to President Harry Truman. Marshall's task was to end a civil war raging there and build a coalition government that would be friendly to the United States.

The United States supported the Nationalist Party, or Kuomintang, of Chiang Kai-shek, which reportedly had the best chance of evolving into a democratic, pro-American party. Mao Tse-tung, leader of the Chinese Communist Party, was Chiang's rival. He posed a serious threat, since his forces had been gathering strength for some time. State Department officials feared that if Mao gained power, it would be a perfect way for Soviet communists to move into China. The situation was complicated: Marshall's role was to form a coalition between the two groups, even though President Truman had directed that any settlement must leave Chiang in control of the central government. Later in the proceedings, Chou En-lai, the Communist Party's representative at the meetings, accused the United States of a "double policy" in China, and he was right. To further complicate Marshall's mission, Chiang's government was corrupt and weak, with little popular support.[47]

Into this complex set of circumstances came General Marshall. A man who prepared carefully for any task, the demands placed on him before he left Washington prevented him from immersing himself in the details of the China problem. Nevertheless, he applied himself diligently, trying to build a coalition. After three months of constant discussion with representatives from both sides, it appeared he had a military pact. To seek the funding needed to aid what he hoped would be a unified Chinese government, he left for Washington in March 1946. He realized that without economic support, any new government would probably fail.

One month later, when Marshall returned to China, this time with Katherine, he was dismayed to find that the Communists and Nationalists were on the verge of war again. By summer the extreme elements of both sides were in charge. His efforts to negotiate a new settlement were exhausting. Katherine, who saw the strain on Marshall, was angry, saying that her husband had been reduced to being "a messenger boy between the generalissimo (Chiang) and the Communists."[48] Though Marshall tried for another seven months to persuade the parties to come to the conference table, he finally realized, after 300 meetings between them, that his efforts were useless. By early January 1947, General Marshall was back in Washington. The China mission would be one of the few failures of Marshall's career. Given the circumstances, it is doubtful that anyone else could have done a better job, but it linked Marshall's mission to losing China to the forces of communism.

Even before leaving China, General Marshall knew he would not be coming back to a longed-for retirement. In June 1946, Truman sent Dwight D. Eisenhower to Nanking to ask Marshall if he would be willing to become the secretary of state. President Truman wanted Marshall to replace James Brynes, a man with whom the president clashed. General Marshall was agreeable to taking the post, though at that point he wasn't ready to "fold his tent" on negotiating another truce between Chiang and Chairman Mao. Of course, that truce never came. Eventually, after considerable persuasion by Truman, Marshall agreed to end his efforts at unifying the Chinese government and return home. On January 21, 1947, General Marshall was sworn in as secretary of state. His confirmation hearing before the U.S. Senate had taken less than one hour.

Secretary of State Marshall quickly found his attention firmly focused back in Europe. Conditions there could hardly have been more severe in the aftermath of the second great war of the century. These countries experienced a severe drought in the summer of 1946, and the winter of early 1947 was one of the most bitter on record. Temperatures were below zero and snow fell in record amounts. Normal waterway traffic came to a standstill as barges and boats froze in rivers. Food was in scarce supply in both victorious and defeated nations. In Austria and Germany, people were dying in the streets from starvation. Few German cities or towns had escaped allied bombing, street fighting, or destruction by the retreating Nazi troops. There was little industrial activity. Factories lacked the raw materials needed to produce finished products, and getting these goods to market was hindered by destroyed bridges, railroads, and ports. Crime rates were high and black markets did a booming business. Even Britain was in great trouble. Six million workers were without jobs; food was rationed more tightly than before the war.[49]

Equally troublesome was the situation in the Balkans. Marshall vividly remembered that throughout the war Winston Churchill had wanted to send troops into this area. The prime minister had said he wanted to do this to keep the Russians from moving into areas once controlled by the Axis powers. Marshall had thought that Churchill's insistence had more to do with preserving Britain's power. Now it seemed that his predictions might come true. In Greece, the British had only temporarily succeeded in ending a civil war, one that had been stirred up and supplied by the Soviets. In nearby Turkey, British aid had kept its leaders from giving in to Soviet threats, but for how long? The truth was that Great Britain had run out of money to provide needed financial support, and announced it would be pulling out of these regions.[50] If aid to these countries stopped, both would come under Soviet power.

By this time, Americans had begun to see Soviet expansion as dangerous, a threat to democracies everywhere. Truman had taken to heart a long cable written in February 1946 by George F. Kennan, a U.S. diplomat assigned to Moscow. He had warned that the Soviets were very insecure, and believed the outside world was hostile toward them. According to Kennan, there was nothing the United States could do to set aside the Soviets' feeling of distrust. Furthermore, he stated, the Soviets saw expansion as a way of countering their fears of the outside world.

Children play among the ruins of their city in Germany, 1946.

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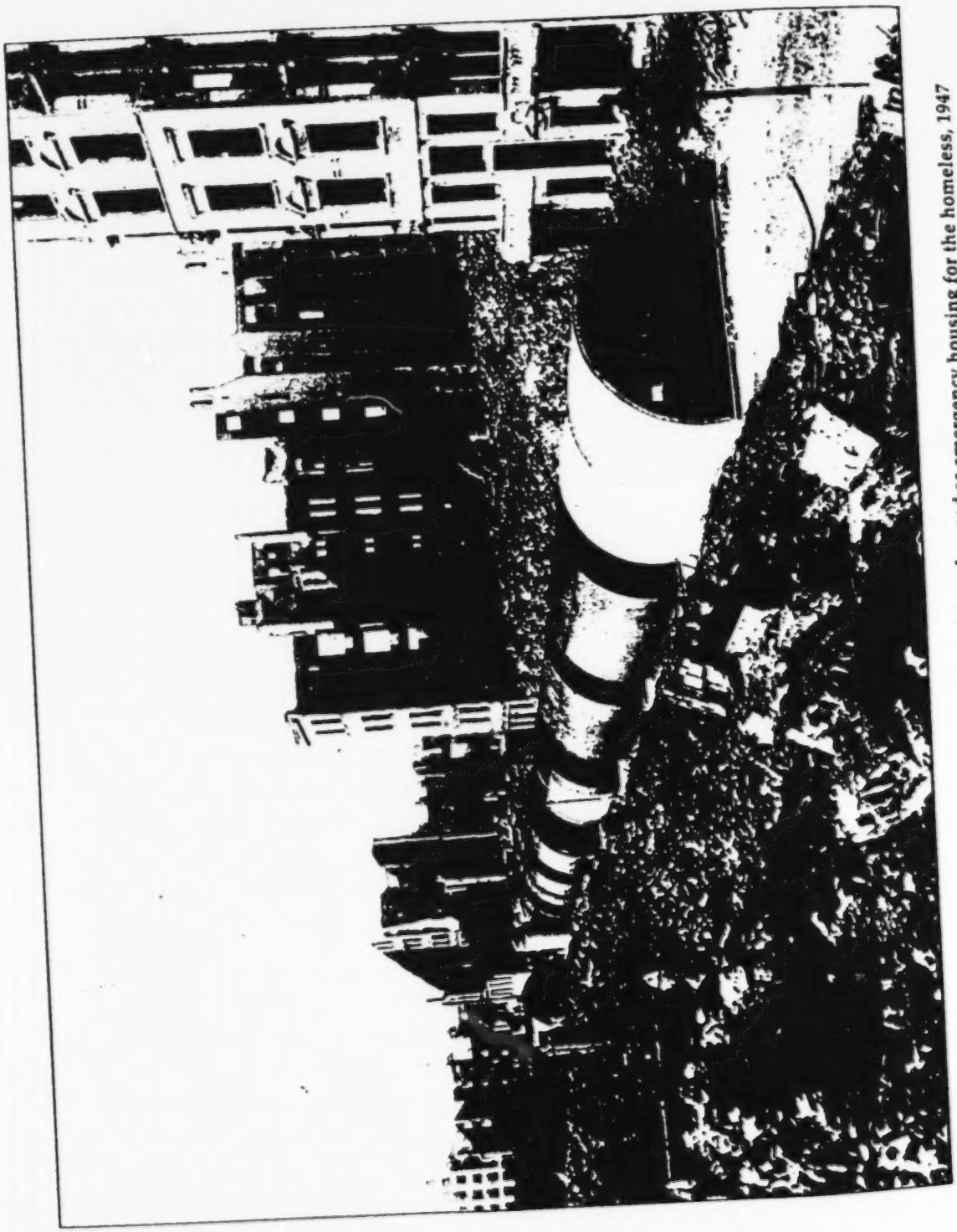
Therefore, the United States should view the Soviet Union as a threat. It should seek to contain any expansion of the Soviet Union into areas where democracy was threatened. This containment would create a counterforce if the Soviets showed signs of aggression. The Truman Doctrine, first put forth in a speech given in March 1947, reflected the containment idea. The president believed that the United States should have a policy of supporting any free people who were resisting efforts on the part of "armed minorities" to control them. In the same speech, he asked for $400 million to aid Greece and Turkey. Congress quickly approved the request.

Secretary of State Marshall had read Kennan's report and accepted most of the ideas contained in it. In fact, he later appointed Kennan to head his Policy Planning staff at the State Department. Marshall, however, wasn't convinced that there could never be cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union. Then came the Foreign Ministers Conference of March and April 1947. Through the raw, chilly days of a Moscow spring, Marshall came to understand the rigidness of Soviet leaders.

The primary task of the conference was drafting a German peace treaty. After World War II ended, the four Allies—the U.S., Soviet Union, Great Britain, and France—had jointly occupied Germany. Berlin, within Soviet East Germany, was also divided among the four powers. A primary question was how long the Allies should occupy Germany and under what circumstances. The Soviets favored getting the Allies out of Germany quickly, since they wanted to set up a communist government similar to those in Poland and other Eastern European countries. Moreover, the Soviets refused to settle any issue having to do with postwar Germany until the Allies agreed to force Germany to pay reparations in the amount of $10 billion. Never mind that a defeated, war-torn Germany simply could not pay it. Without British and Americans loans, the German people would have faced widespread starvation. Reparations would bleed them dry, and result in economic ruin. This outcome would affect the economic health of other nations of Europe. Marshall remembered well the conditions in Germany at the end of World War I. Those conditions had created an atmosphere ripe for Hitler's rise to power. Marshall was convinced that Germany had to be reconstructed along democratic lines, and that process must include political and economic freedom.

Frustrated with the stubbornness of Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov throughout the proceedings, General Marshall decided to meet personally with Joseph Stalin, to understand his views. Alan Saunders points out that after the meeting, "Marshall became convinced that a weak, starving, disheartened Europe was precisely what Stalin wanted, for an unemployed, unhappy and hungry populace offers the best recruits for communism." By the time he returned to the United States, Marshall had the firm conviction that dramatic action was needed to revive Europe, and especially Germany. Otherwise, with other war-torn countries, it would fall under the communist Iron Curtain that was already descending upon Eastern Europe. In a speech describing the terrible conditions in Europe, Marshall said, "The patient is sinking while the doctor deliberates."



...ny before the Marshall Plan: Corrugated iron barracks used as emergency housing for the homeless, 1947

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If the economically strong United States failed to act, there would be a complete breakdown of Western Europe.

Several State Department officials, including George Kennan, William Clayton, and Dean Acheson, had been analyzing why communism was gaining ground in Europe. They concluded that the reason was not Europe's great desire for communism. The Soviets were simply taking advantage of a situation, not creating it. The problem was economic, political, and social despair. Countries were tempted by communism because it was their "last straw." A program for economic recovery must be planned. They all emphasized the need for "quick action."[51] Marshall listened to them and asked that they give him ideas for an assistance program to restore the economic health of Europe.

Marshall then asked Kennan, along with a Soviet specialist and assistant, Charles Bohlen, to write a speech outlining a plan for economic aid to Europe. They were to draw on their own experiences, along with the ideas that had been presented by Clayton and Acheson. Before they got back to him with their speeches, Marshall wrote his own. In the end, he combined all three speeches into one. He decided that he would present the speech at Harvard University on June 5. He was already scheduled to receive an honorary doctorate at Harvard's graduation ceremonies. It would be just the kind of low-key setting he thought best. Marshall was still revising the speech on the plane traveling to Boston. Direct and straightforward in the Marshall style, the speech took just 10 minutes to deliver. The idea he introduced would change the course of modern history.

Marshall told the Harvard students and assembled dignitaries at Harvard that the countries of Europe needed help, and the United States was willing to provide it. Two points, though, were crucial. First, his appeal would have a broad base: "Our policy is directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos." In other words, all countries, victor or vanquished, could receive aid, including the Germans and the Soviets. Second, the United States would not simply be filling a shopping list of needs from Europe. The countries, "acting cooperatively," would have the responsibility of developing their own recovery plan. The role of the United States would be to provide friendly aid to these countries. Marshall ended his speech by saying, "The whole world's future hangs on a proper judgment, hangs on the realization of the American people of what can best be done, of what must be done."

The European reaction came with remarkable speed. A BBC correspondent, Leonard Maill, decided to transmit portions of the Harvard speech for the 9:00 p.m. news. By chance, British Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin, who had gone to bed but was listening to the radio, heard Maill's report. The message was clear: the *initiative* must come from Europe. He wasted no time. He would later say that the United States had thrown Europe a lifeline and he "grabbed it with both hands."By the next day he had spoken to French Foreign Minister Georges Bidault and suggested they organize a meeting. Bevin also called Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov, and they agreed to come to Paris in late June. Only 22 days after Marshall's Harvard speech, all three ministers were discussing a plan for Europe.

Not surprisingly, the Soviets had problems from the start with the terms of the Marshall Plan. They did not want to reveal their needs to the other nations. Yet without that openness, it was going to be difficult for European leaders to develop the unified, integrated plan required by the terms of the U.S. proposal. The Soviets also did not like the idea of East-West trade; this would ruin their plan to control the commerce of the Eastern Bloc countries that were within Russia's economic "sphere of influence." The Marshall Plan also required that the Soviets buy needed goods from the democracies, especially the United States. The whole idea of trade with the West seemed very threatening to them. Molotov called the Marshall Plan nothing more than "American economic imperialism" in action. The Soviet prime minister broke off talks with the British and French Ministers and left Paris. Eventually the Eastern Bloc countries would be bullied by Moscow into withdrawing from participation in the European Recovery Plan as well.

With the Soviets out of the picture, it seemed there would be smooth sailing for developing an "integrated plan" for the rebuilding of Europe. But, in fact, the French became almost a larger obstacle than the Soviets in terms of completing a proposal to submit to the United States. France did not want to see Germany rebuilt. The French people had been invaded by Germany three times in a century, once in 1871, again in 1914, and once more in 1940. Now, Germany was supposed to be a part of the Mashall Plan? France wanted very much to keep Germany weak. They believed the best way to do that would be to greatly limit production in the Saar and the Ruhr, the great coal- and steel-producing regions of Germany. The problem was that these two areas were extremely important to the reconstruction of Europe as a whole. A weak Germany was a weak Europe, especially when it came to coal and steel production. However, despite the French view, many other European nations had enjoyed strong trade ties with Germany in the past. They did not want to see an end to that trade relationship. Delegations from other European nations finally brought pressure to bear on the French to change their minds. Germany would be rebuilt as a strong producer nation.

In July, other European nations joined the British and the French to discuss European reconstruction, including the question of rebuilding Germany. Those nations were Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland (which participated but received no aid), Turkey and representatives from the Western occupation zones of Germany. By September, they had put together a proposal for $17 billion in aid over a four-year period to revive the economies of 16 countries and the western zones of Germany. By mid-December, 1947, Congress had approved a $600 million measure to provide temporary aid to Western Europe through the coming winter. A few days later, President Truman sent the $17 billion European Recovery Program (ERP) to Congress for its approval.

George C. Marshall understood that getting the European Recovery Proposal through Congress would be a tough fight. The job of convincing Congress, which had just managed the financing of America's participation in a world war, was difficult. Later Marshall was to tell his biographer, Forrest Pogue: "It wasn't the idea of the so-called Marshall Plan—it wasn't so much that as it was the execution

and how we got it through Congress." There were those who opposed it from the outset, especially Senator Robert Taft, a Republican from Ohio, who was a strong isolationist. He thought that America's focus should be on balancing the budget and reducing taxes, not pouring money into Europe.

But Marshall did have supporters. One of the most important was Senator Arthur Vandenberg, a powerful Republican who was on the Foreign Affairs Committee. Vandenberg had once been an isolationist, but he came to believe in the soundness of the Marshall Plan. It was with this senator that Marshall would hammer out the compromises needed to get congressional approval. Marshall would later say, "We could not have gotten much closer unless I sat in Vandenberg's lap or he sat in mine!"[52] Marshall testified before committees with great conviction and zeal. His views were important in winning more and more congressmen to the Vandenberg side.

In addition to testifying before the Congress, Marshall went on a publicity campaign to convince Americans they also should support the plan. He used three approaches. First, he brought the message to the hometowns of America: If Europe's economy did not become healthy, America's economy would cease to be healthy as well—we were all in it together. He also reminded audiences that Europe's recovery would be made through the purchase of *American* farm and factory products. After the Soviets rejected the plan, Marshall hinted more and more strongly that the possibility of communist expansion in Europe was quite possible if conditions didn't improve. Finally, he appealed to the humanity of the plan. It was simply the right thing to do for people who had suffered through the horrors of war. He told Pogue, "I worked on that as hard as though I was running for the Senate or the presidency . . . . It was a struggle from start to finish, and that's what I'm proud of, that we actually did that and put it over." Marshall was the key person responsible for bringing the idea to the public, organizing it into a plan and gaining its acceptance by the American people. Though it took almost a year, the European Recovery Plan finally became law in April of 1948.

Only two weeks later, the freighter *John H. Quick* sailed out of Galveston, Texas, with 9,000 tons of wheat, headed for Europe. It was the first cargo of the Marshall Plan.[53] By the time the European Recovery Program was completed on December 31, 1951, over $13 billion had been distributed to the 16 participating countries. The aid given by the United States under the Marshall Plan was about 1.2 percent of America's Gross National Product. But consider the dramatic results. Europe's Gross National Product rose an overall 32.5 percent. Industrial production in Europe increased 40 percent over what it had been in 1938. Trade between European countries increased as well, almost 40 percent by 1953. Eventually the expanded trade and cooperation between European countries would evolve into the European Economic Community, (EEC) an organization that has worked to increase economic unity in Europe. Given its goals, the Marshall Plan must be considered the most successful foreign aid program in the history of the republic.[54]

Throughout the Marshall Plan's development, the Soviets had their own reaction. It would complicate Europe's orderly transition into a peacetime world.

An apartment-rebuilding project of the European Recovery Program

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After the Russians rejected the Marshall Plan, the United States, Britain, and France knew that Germany and Berlin would remain divided zones. The Allies, without Soviet approval, decided to unify the British, American, and French occupation regions into one. Coming on the heels of the Marshall Plan, this uniting of the three powers seemed most threatening to Stalin. On June 28, 1948, he ordered the Berlin Blockade. Knowing the other Allies had very little military strength in their sectors, while the Soviets had plenty in theirs, they closed off shipment of supplies by highway into the Allied zone. After a month, they closed off railway traffic as well. The Russians wanted to show their military muscle, and perhaps discourage the Americans, British, and French from staying in that hostile "island" within East Germany.

From an idea first suggested by the commander of U.S. occupation forces in Berlin, Lt. General Lucius Clay, President Truman and Marshall responded to the Soviet's actions by organizing a huge airlift. After all, a blockade couldn't be built in the air. Still, an airlift wasn't that easy. West Berlin was a city of 2½ million people. To ensure even minimal survival, West Berlin needed 4,000 tons of food, fuel, and other necessities daily. After a while, American, British, and French fliers were meeting and exceeding the minimum requirement for the city's survival. During Operation Vittles, these pilots made deliveries for 321 days, logging a total of 277,264 flights. On May 12, 1949, the Soviets removed the barriers, and the blockade was history.[55] Furthermore, instead of the Allies being bullied into accepting this situation, it simply encouraged them to band together further. West Germany was proclaimed a republic the same month the blockade ended. During the fall of 1948, with Marshall's strong support, the Allies stepped up efforts to create a defensive alliance in Western Europe. By the next summer, the U.S. Senate gave its approval to a document creating the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

In the spring of 1948, just before the Berlin Blockade was put in place by the Soviets, another issue was claiming Marshall's time. Great Britain had controlled Palestine under a League of Nations mandate since 1917. British control of Palestine was about to end after 30 years. They announced they would leave Palestine effective May 15, 1948. The United Nations would resolve the question of what would happen to this region. The UN recommended that it be partitioned. If divided, the Jews, including many who had poured into that area after the Holocaust of World War II, could form the independent state of Israel, and the Arabs would live in the other half, Palestine.

While sympathetic to the plight of the Jewish people, Marshall worried that Israel was not ready to become an independent state. He believed Arab opposition to such a move would be fierce and could result in a bloodbath. Further, if fighting started, American troops could be drawn into the dispute. The U.S. military was unprepared to send forces. Even if American troops could be mustered, their presence might anger the Arabs, thus opening the door for increased Russian influence in this vital oil-rich area.[56] The State Department and the newly formed Department of Defense both agreed with this position, and in the spring of 1948 attempted to reverse a partition agreement already made by the UN.

President Truman did not want to reverse the agreement; in fact, he wanted to recognize Israel's independence as soon as they established it. For whatever reasons Truman felt motivated to support the partition, one part of the decision was linked to politics. That fall of 1948, Truman was in a very close presidential race. American Jewish leaders made it clear they would oppose him if the United States attempted to tamper with the decision to establish a Jewish homeland. They felt it would undermine the effectiveness of the new United Nations. Furthermore, it would anger many Americans, Jewish and non-Jewish, who believed that after the horrors of the Holocaust, providing a Jewish homeland was a morally correct move.

On the other hand, Marshall, as secretary of state, saw it as a foreign policy judgment. All of his life he had separated his personal sympathies from what he saw as his duty. It angered him that what he considered sound foreign policy was being linked to an emotional political debate that might bear on election results. Mark Stoler concedes that Marshall "incorrectly tended to see this as the only issue." As the debate continued, Marshall seemed to edge away from his strong opposition to a Jewish state. Whether eventually he would have agreed, or not, one thing he understood perfectly. It was the president's constitutional right to make the decision, not his. Truman recognized the state of Israel immediately after it declared independence on May 15, 1948. That November he won in an upset over his opponent, Thomas E. Dewey. When it was clear that Truman had been reelected, Marshall, who was in Paris at the time, sent a telegram: "Congratulations on the greatest one-man victory in American history."[57]

On December 7, 1948, Marshall underwent major surgery for the removal of a diseased right kidney. The operation was a success, but the recuperation slow. Marshall was almost 68 years old. He had been intensely involved in the crises of his country since 1939. By his own admission, he had been off only 19 days since he became army chief of staff. On January 2, 1949, Marshall resigned his State Department post. At last, retirement! The next three months were the laziest Marshall had spent since his boyhood. He and Katherine traveled to Puerto Rico and Florida, and attended Mardi Gras in New Orleans. Invitations poured in for him to make speeches, to open buildings, or perform other honorary duties.[58] Every time he thought about accepting such offers, he resisted. Until President Truman called again.

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General and Mrs. Marshall at Dodona Manor, June 28, 1949

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Chapter 9

Service Without Uniform — A Recall and a Long Rest

1949-1959

George and Katherine Marshall enjoyed the spring and summer of 1949. At home in Leesburg, they tended their gardens as they had always dreamed they would. Marshall planted the vegetables--tomatoes, corn, carrots, peas, and squash. Katherine worked on her flower borders, planting sweet-william, zinnias, lilies, and roses. At lunchtime, they ate in the "stone court," a back patio with a shading pergola. Only cold or a blowing rain forced them inside. In the afternoons the Marshalls enjoyed reading. He preferred novels, mysteries, and, increasingly, the memoirs of his former wartime officers. Having retired as a five-star general, he was considered permanently "active." This status entitled him to receive office space at the Pentagon, a full-time aide, active-duty pay, and full benefits from the army. Only occasionally did he leave the quiet of Dodona for a day's work at the Pentagon. There he might receive visitors wishing to see him, and answer correspondence. He got as many as 50 letters a day from people needing help on some military matter, often related to the war, or those who simply wanted to show their admiration for him. With the help of his secretary, he either answered them, or saw that they reached someone else in the Pentagon who would follow up. Commitments, such as acting as trustee of the American Institute of Pacific Relations or holding membership on the American Battle Monuments Commission, were kept to a minimum. Even so, the Marshalls could see another task in the making.

In early March 1949, President Harry S. Truman had visited the Marshalls at their winter cottage in Pinehurst, North Carolina. The president asked General Marshall if he would consider becoming president of the American Red Cross. Katherine actually favored this appointment because she had always been active in that organization and thought its peacetime work seemed so much more appealing than the disheartening tasks of the war years. Marshall was sworn in as the American Red Cross president in late September 1949. Though this seemed like "light duty," General Marshall's skills were badly needed. The Red Cross was chartered by Congress, but its programs are financed through private donations. Much of the work was done by volunteers. At this time, the organization was being run by a group of wealthy and socially prominent Easterners who seemed to be ignoring the decision-making capabilities of those who worked in the field offices across the land. Volunteers were feeling discouraged, and interest in the organization was waning.

Marshall was greatly respected in many circles. Surely as president of the Red Cross he would pump new life into its operations. He restructured the organization from the top, so that regional workers, especially the all-important volunteers, would have a larger voice in the policy making. The number of volunteers went up, and the enthusiasm and zeal of those who were already there returned.

THE BL DU DONATE...
...MAY SAVE HIS LIFE
FORCES BLOOD DONOR PROGRAM
ARMED FORCES BLOOD DONOR PROGRAM
GIVE BLOOD SAVE A LIFE
Contact Your Nearest Blood Donor Center

General Marshall as president of the American Red Cross with General Omar Bradley

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Furthermore, as amazing as it seemed, General Marshall was becoming something of a public relations man. He learned the importance of this role when he visited virtually every corner of the country in late 1947 and early 1948, to sell the European Recovery Act. Now, as president of the American Red Cross, he was doing similar things. He traveled 35,000 miles in one year, visiting local Red Cross chapters in many towns and cities. He spoke to the press, talked on the radio, and posed for photographs in local communities to promote the humanitarian work of the Red Cross. Programs to expand the nation's blood bank and to help the families of servicemen were of special interest to General Marshall. He knew the importance of these services from personal experience. The start of the Korean War in June 1950 brought added attention to the work of this organization. It would also bring an end to Marshall's work with the American Red Cross.

Much had happened the year General Marshall was away from the national scene. For instance, the cold war struggle between the United States and the communist world had intensified. Word came in September 1949 that the Soviet Union had successfully exploded its first atomic weapon. Americans could no longer count on both the military and psychological advantage of being the only nation with atomic capability. Late in 1949, a defeated Chiang Kai-shek left China for Formosa (Taiwan) with his political allies and the remnants of his army. China's entire mainland came under the control of a communist government headed by Mao Tse-tung. The United States could do nothing to help Chiang without making a major military commitment almost no one wanted. Then, on February 3, 1950, Klaus Fuchs, a German physicist, confessed in London that he had given nuclear weapons information, received from spies on the Manhattan Project, to the Soviets. Less than a week later, Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy gave a speech saying he had "proof" that there were 205 members of the Communist Party working in the State Department.[59]

Only four years after the clear-cut victory in World War II, Americans were feeling much less secure. In fact, they were beginning to feel suspicious, even paranoid. They tended to blame the Truman administration for some of these failures. Their anxiety was fueled by the spy discovery, and by a strong right-wing element in Congress that tended to reject former bipartisan efforts. Republicans began attacking the administration, claiming it lost China, and the nation's nuclear monopoly, to the communists. Such accusations tended to reinforce a tendency on the part of the administration to view the cold war in hard-line military and global terms. President Truman called for a strong, "get tough" policy toward the Russians. They were the enemy, pure and simple; we had to be prepared to contain them on all fronts. Gains of any size by the Soviets, even in faraway Asia, must be viewed as having a larger goal: expansion and world dominance. In Europe, the Berlin crisis and the formation of NATO reinforced the idea of military containment. It pointed toward a tendency to think of the world as divided: the United States and its allies versus the Soviet Union and its allies.[60] Whether the U.S. Congress would have budgeted for such a protective role in ordinary times is open to question. Congress did approve a big military buildup in late 1950-1951 because the United States was confronted with a new circumstance: an undeclared war in Korea.

The Asian peninsula of Korea had once been part of the Japanese empire, and the Allies had promised Korea its independence after World War II. At the end of the war, it was occupied in the south by the United States, and in the north by the Soviets. A separation between the two regions at the 38th parallel was supposed to be temporary until elections could be held to unify the country. The Soviets defied UN attempts to unify Korea by free elections. A communist government, headed by Kim Il-Sung, was set up in North Korea. In South Korea, a UN-supervised election established an anticommunist government headed by President Syngman Rhee. As the two powers began to remove their occupation troops, each Korean government threatened to combine the country by force. The North Koreans struck first, crashing across the 38th parallel into the south on June 25, 1950.[61]

President Truman's administration interpreted North Korea's aggressive action not in local terms but as a Soviet-directed cold war move. Truman believed it could be compared to Hitler's aggressive actions in Europe in the 1930s. The president did not want to be accused of appeasement in this case. He was determined to meet aggression with aggression, and he immediately appealed to the United Nations. The UN Security Council labeled North Korea the aggressor and called for collective military action against the north. They were able to do this only because the Soviet Union happened to be boycotting the United Nations at that time. They had been angered because the UN would not recognize Mao's mainland government as the legitimate China. General Douglas MacArthur was ordered to command all U.S., UN, and South Korean troops. He was to drive the North Koreans back.

General George C. Marshall was about to hear from President Truman once again. In August 1950, George and Katherine were vacationing at a Michigan fishing camp on Huron Mountain when Truman's White House operators located him. A messenger came to the camp saying a phone call was waiting for Marshall at a country store down the road. Marshall took the call, while the store's local cronies listened in, all the time showing no outward interest. They heard Marshall's gruff response. He would return to Washington as the secretary of defense. Marshall had suspected that the request might be coming. That summer, President Truman had driven out to Leesburg to explain to Marshall that he might be needed. Truman reminded Marshall that the United States was in a war, though not a declared one. It was a UN "police action," but it would still require the buildup of the army. Further, there were troubles in the cabinet. The Department of State was at odds with the newly formed Department of Defense. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, within the Department of Defense, did not like their civilian leader, Louis Johnson. Truman did not like him either, saying, "Louis had a . . . desire to run the whole government."[62] The situation seemed to need the balanced views of George C. Marshall. The telephone call to Michigan only confirmed what Marshall had known loomed on the horizon, another call to duty.

Marshall's confirmation by the U.S. Senate was not automatic. For one thing, the National Security Act of 1947 prevented an officer who had been on active duty within the past 10 years from becoming Secretary of Defense. This policy supported the time-honored American belief in strong civilian control over the

military. Allowing an exception in Marshall's case required an amendment to the act. In addition to that hurdle, there were vicious attacks on him, attempts to paint him as a communist. Paranoia and suspicion had reached Congress. The worst assault came from Senator William Jenner of Indiana, who accused Marshall of being responsible for the loss of Nationalist China. Jenner called Marshall "an errand boy, a front man, a stooge or co-conspirator for this administration's crazy assortment of collectivist cutthroats, and Communist fellow-traveling appeasers."[63] This was only the beginning of a shameful time in American politics, where leaders of excellent character were accused of being "in bed with the commies." It would be the era of the "Red scare," a time of hysteria when certain people in government looked for scapegoats. They wanted someone to blame for what appeared to a large number of communist victories. Marshall was not intimidated by Senator Jenner's attacks. He answered the outrageous questions with a combination of "dignity, honesty, and contempt." Such verbal abuse did not prevent overwhelmingly favorable votes in both houses to amend the National Security Act and confirm Marshall's appointment in the cabinet.[64] On September 21, 1950, he became the secretary of defense.

One of Marshall's biggest tasks in this new role was to mobilize an army. He later commented: "I was getting rather hardened to coming in when everything had gone to pot and there was nothing you could get your hands on, and darned if I didn't find the same thing when I came into the Korean War."[65] Here was a time when Marshall's concept of universal military training would have paid off. Since the 20s he had promoted this idea as being vital to American security. Each new war strengthened the belief. In this country there had always been a suspicion of a large permanent military force. Americans didn't like to see an armed solider on every street corner. Marshall agreed, but he also believed in preparedness. His idea was to give every young man in America six months of rigorous military training, using the very best officers and equipment the army had to offer. After that six months, he would be placed on reserve status. If an emergency arose, the United States would have a substantial reserve of trained "citizen soldiers" and officers who could be called into active service with a minimum loss of time.[66] As army chief of staff, Marshall had suggested the benefits of such a plan in his final report. He had pressed for legislation on this before going to China, and as secretary of state, but it had never happened.

Once again, with the Korean War in progress, he sought Congressional approval for his concept of universal military training. This idea, which Marshall believed to be an excellent compromise for integrating global military needs in a democratic society, never came to be in his lifetime. To meet the immediate crisis, Marshall gained approval to double the army's strength by April of 1951. Drawing on his past experience and his organizational skills, he once again built the army into a fighting force. In June 1951, Congress passed legislation extending the draft for four years, lowered the draft age to 18½, and increased the period of active duty to two years. Finally, it tacked on a six-year term in the inactive reserve.[67] These actions were as close as Marshall would get to accomplishing his goal of maintaining a prepared force.

With troop strength building, Marshall had an internal problem to solve. He had to restore harmony between the Department of Defense and the State Department. This was where past relationships paid off. Almost all of the key players in these two departments were people with whom he had previously worked and who greatly respected him. For example, General Omar Bradley was head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—Marshall had directed him in World War II. Dean Acheson, who worked with Marshall at the Department of State, was now the secretary himself. Soon Marshall was able to smooth ruffled feathers and bring unusual harmony between these two cabinet-level departments. Marshall fully understood the need for civilian control over the military. Despite his five-star general's rank, while serving as secretary of defense he sat on the civilian side of the table, along with the secretary of state.[68]

The real war, though, was in Korea, not in the cabinet offices along the Potomac. When Marshall became secretary of defense, strategy and policy for fighting the war in Korea had already been determined. He had little to do with it. In the beginning, the North Koreans had pushed the South Koreans almost to the southern tip of the peninsula. But through a daring stroke by General MacArthur, American troops landed at Inchon, behind North Korean lines. At the same time, UN forces attacked from the south, pushing up from Pusan. The combined effect resulted in the North Koreans being pushed back north of the 38th parallel. This action, in fact, accomplished the UN's goal of halting aggression by defeating the North Korean invasion. However, MacArthur's progress had been so impressive, so dramatic, that many officials sought to return to the earlier policy regarding Korea: the object of unifying the whole peninsula under one government. Marshall, who had just come on board as this policy was being shaped, approved this approach.

General MacArthur was told that his task was to destroy North Korean forces, and he could go north of the 38th Parallel to do this. If the Chinese or Soviets showed signs of military activity in North Korea, certain limits would apply. For example, when fighting forces got close to the Yalu, only Republic of Korea troops (ROKs), not Americans, were to participate in the fighting. Under no circumstances was MacArthur to allow any troops to cross the Yalu. Finally, there were to be no naval or air actions against Chinese or Soviet territories. By mid-October 1950, MacArthur's forces had taken the North Korean capital and were headed toward the Yalu River, way north, on the Chinese border.[69] The joint chiefs warned MacArthur once more that he was not to go into China and to keep in mind that this was a United Nations operation.

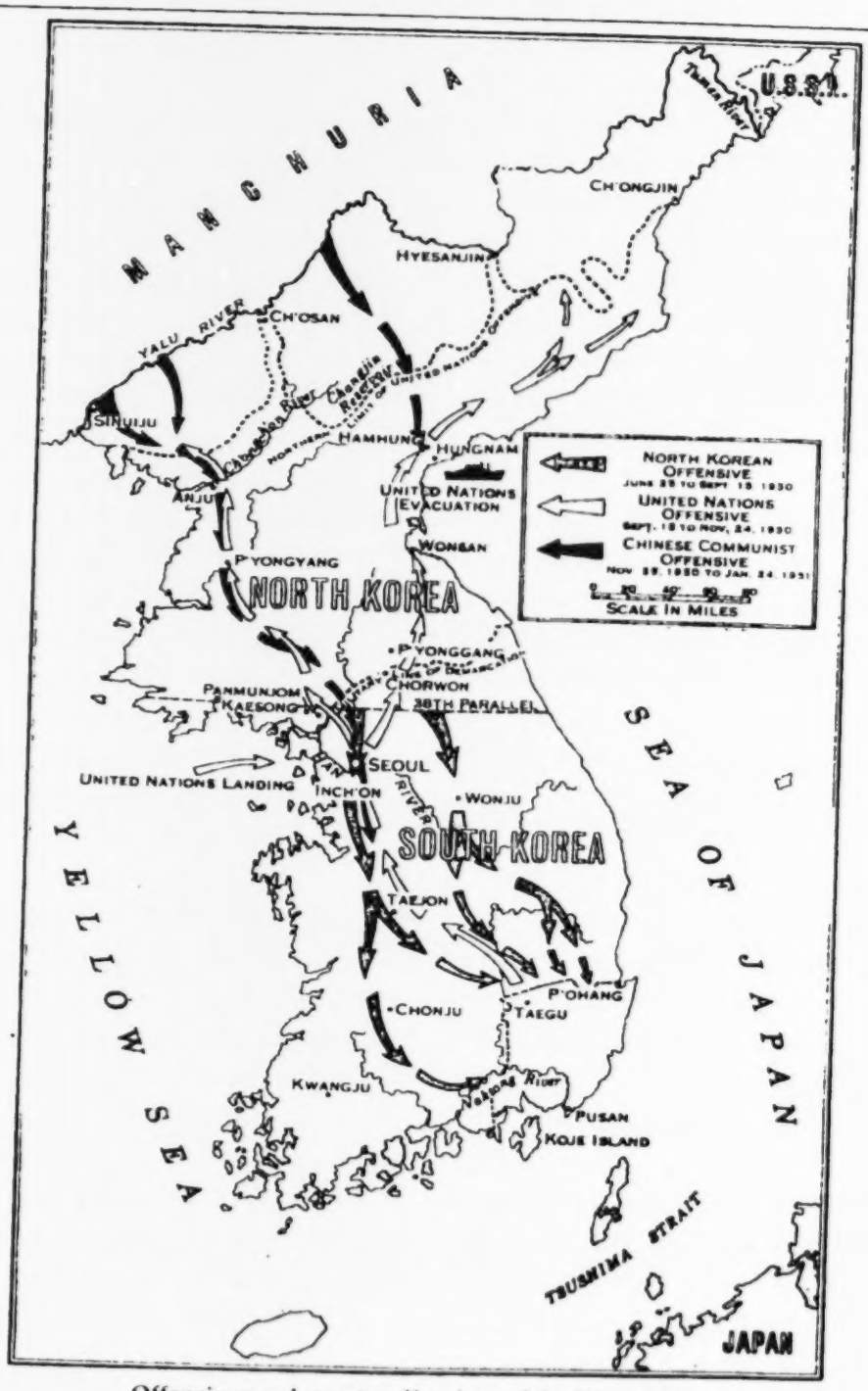
The fact that UN troops were so close to the Chinese border worried President Truman. He decided to fly to Wake Island in the Pacific to meet personally with General MacArthur. Bradley of the Joint Chiefs of Staff went with Truman, along with the secretary of the army and the assistant secretary of state, Dean Rusk. Marshall stayed in Washington to "mind the store." At the Wake Island meeting, MacArthur was in an optimistic mood, saying any opposition from the North Koreans should be over by Thanksgiving. He went so far as saying that American troops would eat their Christmas dinners at home. When Truman asked

MacArthur what he thought of the possibility of Chinese troops crossing the Yalu River into North Korea, the general told him, "very little chance." Even though the Chinese had large forces on the Yalu, the UN commander didn't think they would cross the border for lack of air power.[70]

Despite MacArthur's optimistic view, there was evidence in early November that the Chinese were building up forces south of the Chinese border in North Korea. Any notion that MacArthur had the military situation under control was shattered on November 25, 1950. U.S. troops were brutally attacked. Out of the snowy mountains of North Korea burst 300,000 well-trained Chinese Communists. The two-pronged offensive that took U.S. troops almost to the Chinese border was stopped cold. As Ed Cray said, "Within days, entire divisions were cut off, battalions and regiments hacked from the main body one by one," then destroyed as they turned south for safety. It was a disaster. A shaken MacArthur told the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "We face an entirely new war." A total defeat seemed likely. One of MacArthur's two "prongs" had to be rescued by sea, the other retreated below the 38th parallel. By early 1951, the badly mauled Eighth Army, now combined with the Tenth Corps, had escaped the Chinese trap. Under a new Eighth Army commander, Matthew Ridgeway, they had established a defensive line and were ready to go on the offensive.[71]

Yet, the United States could not risk a war with China. Expanding the war in Asia would not advance this nation's objectives. Its primary focus was to strengthen the European countries through NATO and seek limited foreign policy objectives in Asia. Furthermore, war with China would certainly create a global crisis. If we used our nuclear capability in a full-scale war against Communist China, the Soviet Union would most likely use its nuclear capability against us. We could not risk a World War III.[72] Responding to pressure from our United Nations allies, the Truman administration began weighing the possibility of halting any counteroffensive at or near the 38th parallel. Both military and civilian leaders in Washington, including Marshall, concluded that we had to rethink our "unified Korea" objective, possibly returning to our original goal of containing North Korean aggression above the 38th parallel. General MacArthur disagreed with these limited objectives. He had suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of the Red Chinese and very much wanted to launch a major counteroffensive.

MacArthur had the right and was encouraged to offer alternative approaches for fighting the war in Korea. Yet, he was duty-bound to obey any directives his superiors gave him, even if they did not choose his approach. Not only did he not do that, but he publicly denounced those directives. Despite orders to the contrary, MacArthur continued to act as if unification of Korean was the goal of the United States. He had protested to the joint chiefs that any restrictions imposed on air and naval operations against the Chinese made it "completely impracticable to attempt to clear North Korea." On March 24, 1951, in a public statement, he insulted the Red Chinese, calling them militarily weak. He implied that if the United Nations departed only slightly from its "tolerant effort to contain the war to the area of Korea," Communist China "would be doomed to collapse."



Offensives and counteroffensives of the Korean War

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These remarks were made just as President Truman was arranging peace talks with the Chinese to negotiate an early settlement over the Korean question. To Washington observers it seemed that the general was deliberately trying to undermine the president's efforts. Also, that previous December 6, MacArthur had received a directive from the joint chiefs that any public statements about the Korean war situation should be cleared ahead of time. Truman considered the general's actions insubordinate and was ready to fire him. Yet he knew he would need the approval of Marshall and the joint chiefs, and he asked them to decide what to do in this case. The message the joint chiefs sent to MacArthur was surprisingly mild: Public policy statements had to be cleared through the White House.[73]

On April 5, House minority leader Joseph Martin publicly read a letter written by General MacArthur. In it the general criticized the Europe-first strategy, called for Chiang Kai-shek to open up a second front against Red China by invading the mainland, and stated that there was no substitute for victory. This letter and his other violations showed his open refusal to accept the strategy and policy agreed on by his superiors. When Marshall learned that Truman planned to fire MacArthur, he was worried because he knew the political fallout would be enormous. The hero of World War II was practically worshipped in some quarters. Furthermore, Marshall had always believed that field commanders should be given lots of leeway in the methods they used to accomplish their tasks. Despite MacArthur's mistakes, Marshall continued to urge caution. Over the weekend of April 7, 1951, he met with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and searched for some alternative to relieving the general of command. They concluded that in light of what MacArthur had done, the only alternative was to unanimously recommend that he be fired. On April 10, 1951, President Truman did just that.[74]

The criticism of Truman's action came fast and furious, some even called for his impeachment. Meanwhile, MacArthur returned home to a huge welcome, including a ticker-tape parade down the streets of New York City. He was invited to speak before a joint session of Congress. He ended a sentimental speech by saying, "I now close my military career, an old soldier who tried to do his duty as God gave him the life to see that duty. Goodbye." Congress gave him thunderous applause. Later, he asserted that Marshall and the joint chiefs had backed every one of his strategic concepts for Korea.

However, when Marshall and the joint chiefs testified about MacArthur's removal, it seemed clear that indeed the U.S. commander in the Pacific had overstepped his orders. As General Omar Bradley said on the first day of the testimony, "Frankly, in the opinion of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, this strategy [MacArthur's] would involve us in the wrong war, at the wrong place, at the wrong time, and with the wrong enemy."[75] The words of the joint chiefs and Marshall tamped down the criticism that had flowed against Truman. It seemed clear that the president had acted within his constitutional authority and that his policy had been appropriate. According to Marshall, MacArthur had grown so out of sympathy with the policy that there was grave doubt as to whether he could be trusted to make decisions based on the policy. That was his sworn duty, and when he could not do it, the

only choice was to relieve him. Moreover, Marshall explained and defended the president's position of limited engagement in Korea, telling the committee that national policy had been, and still was, to defeat the aggression from the north without provoking a third world war.

Although the MacArthur crisis had simmered down by summer, the vicious attacks by the Republican right wing continued. The worst was a 60,000-word attack that Senator Joseph McCarthy read on the Senate floor that June 14, 1951. In effect, this 169-page "book," written by a Washington newspaperman, accused Marshall of treason, calling him a man "guilty of an immense conspiracy" and a leader who had made "common cause with Stalin." He continued reading even as the crowd in the Senate gallery began to thin, telling his smaller audience that Marshall "created the China policy that destroyed China," and on and on he went. As it got closer to the dinner hour, he was still reading, yet skipping many pages of his text as even he wore out. By the time he sputtered to the end of the speech, most of the gallery audience had left, and only two senators remained to listen. Still, he insisted that every word of it be placed in the *Congressional Record*. Dozens of senators, congressmen, journalists, and military men came to Marshall's defense, even those who had disagreed with his policies. When Marshall was besieged by reporters wanting to know what he thought, he refused to respond. A noted newspaper columnist gathered materials to help Marshall rebut Senator McCarthy's accusations, to prove him wrong. Marshall declined the offer, saying, "I do appreciate that, but if I have to explain at this point that I am not a traitor to the United States, I hardly think it's worth it."

Marshall had done his work at the Defense Department. He was worn out, and almost 70 years old. His hearing wasn't a good as it used to be, a failing he thought was serious for a public official. Marshall had told Truman he would stay six months at the Department of Defense. He had stayed a year. Robert A. Lovett, the under secretary, was doing much of his work these days, he could easily step in. On September 12, 1951, Marshall returned home to Leesburg, this time for good. The Marshalls settled into a comfortable routine at Dodona Manor. General Marshall's orderly, Sergeant William Hefner, helped him, driving him when he needed to go into Washington. Otherwise, Marshall ran errands around town, attended Rotary meetings, went with Katherine to the movies at the local Tally Ho Theater, and, of course, worked in his garden. In the winters, they locked up their Leesburg home and headed to the warmer climes of Pinehurst, North Carolina.

The Marshalls resisted efforts to draw them back into the busy world he had left behind. For one thing, they wanted to be near Katherine's oldest son, Clifton, who was seriously ill with lung cancer at Walter Reed Hospital. He died in the summer of 1952. This devastating loss was the second the Marshalls had suffered in just eight years. Molly visited with her three children, Jimmy, Kitty, and Ellene, and their laughter greatly cheered Katherine and George. General Marshall did agree to be chairman of the American Battle Monuments Commission. It wasn't a very taxing role and it seemed appropriate, since he was honoring many fallen comrades. In the fall of 1952, he and Katherine took a trip to Europe to inspect American cemeteries on the continent. Perhaps this provided a distraction from their recent grief and allowed them to honor Allen by visiting his grave at Anzio.

President Truman and his daughter, Margaret, on one of his visits
to Dodona Manor to confer with Marshall
Photo, Courtesy of The George C. Marshall International Center at Dodona Manor.

The Marshalls relax with their dogs, "Bones" and "Nato" in the back yard at Dodona Manor.

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Though Marshall wasn't quite as busy as before, he stayed informed by reading several newspapers and listening to the radio in his small study at Dodona. His old friend, Dwight D. Eisenhower was the Republican candidate for the presidency that summer and fall of 1952. During the campaign season, Marshall realized that the ugly influence of Senator Joseph McCarthy was still around. Just for a moment it cast a shadow. General Eisenhower had praised Marshall in an early campaign speech, but he stumbled in Wisconsin, McCarthy's home state. In August, Eisenhower was scheduled to give a speech in Milwaukee. One part of the prepared text forcefully defended General George C. Marshall as a great patriot. Under pressure from McCarthy and the Wisconsin governor, Eisenhower was persuaded to omit the part that praised Marshall. Unfortunately for him, the written version of his remarks had already been given to reporters. It was clear that Eisenhower had been intimidated into not defending the man who had helped him in so many ways. When the press pointed out the omission, Marshall supporters were outraged. Former President Harry Truman said Eisenhower had "betrayed his principles" and "deserted his friends." Marshall didn't let this destroy his relationship with Eisenhower. He told his goddaughter, Rose Wilson: "Eisenhower was forced into a compromise, that's all it was."[76] Later when reporters came to Dodona and asked him what he thought of the incident, he replied: "I am not going to talk about that. You know what he said—I don't need to comment on it. Now, can someone tell me how to keep the blackbirds out of my marigolds?" When the reporters printed Marshall's remarks, he got many letters offering helpful advice on his gardening problems.

Though Eisenhower may have shown a moment's weakness regarding his old friend, he would make up for it many times over. George and Katherine Marshall were invited to Eisenhower's inauguration and were often included on the guest list at White House dinners. In March 1953, Marshall was asked to represent the United States at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II of England. Eisenhower made the appointment, even though his political advisors stressed that McCarthy was still accusing Marshall of losing "a *hundred million* persons a year to international communism." The Marshalls were treated like royalty themselves, arriving in London to visit old friends from the war years. Before the start of the coronation ceremonies at Westminster Abbey, Winston Churchill and Bernard Montgomery, dressed in their robes as Lords of the Realm, left their places in the procession to shake Marshall's hand. As Marshall and General Omar Bradley entered the Abbey, everyone stood up. General Marshall looked around, and asked, "Why are they standing?" "They're standing for you," Bradley said.

An even greater honor would come to General Marshall later that year. In late October 1953, he learned he would receive the Nobel Prize for Peace. Marshall was given this honor for his sponsorship of the European Recovery Program that bore his name. He got up from his sickbed where he was recovering from the flu, to hold a press conference at his Pinehurst cottage. Typically, he credited others, telling reporters it was a tribute "to the American people," and praising the work of the late Senator Vandenberg. Marshall undertook a sea voyage to Naples, then took plane flights to Paris and to Oslo, where the ceremonies were held. Katherine was not well enough to make the trip. Neither was he, but he mustered all the strength he had to make the journey.

George C. Marshall is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, Norway, December 10, 1953.

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Marshall was the first professional soldier to receive this prize. He told the glittering audience at the ceremony, "There has been considerable comment over the awarding of the Nobel Prize . . . to a soldier. I am afraid this does not seem so remarkable to me as it quite evidently appears to others. The cost of war in human lives is constantly spread before me, written neatly in many ledgers whose columns are gravestones. I am deeply moved to find some means or method of avoiding another calamity of war."[77]

Marshall returned to the United States still not quite well. Though he would have another six years of life, his health was never back to par after that winter. He had more colds or bronchitis, and his stays at Walter Reed Hospital would stretch out a bit. Answering letters from well-wishers took up a fair amount of time. To his friends he wrote that he was perfectly fine "from the neck up." By the time he was 75, former staff members were urging him to allow a potential biographer to interview him. Previously he had refused offers from groups who would have paid him handsomely to tell his life story. He said he didn't want to profit from a book, stating that his service to the country was not for sale. His friends countered that a great deal of important history would be lost if he refused to tell his story. Finally, he agreed, but under certain conditions. He would not choose the biographer, neither he nor his family would profit from the book, and he would not answer any questions that could easily be answered by reading his military papers. Meanwhile, the George C. Marshall Foundation had been set up in Lexington, Virginia, to gather his military papers into a research library. Members of the foundation selected Forrest C. Pogue, a military historian, as Marshall's biographer. From the fall of 1956 until the spring of 1957, Marshall spent many days answering questions, which the writer recorded on audiotape. By the spring, he complained of not being able to recall certain details. He was slowing down. Marshall joked with Pogue that he heard Mrs. Marshall saying that she had to take him for a walk in the garden, as though he were an invalid.

In 1958 it was clear that General Marshall's health was failing. In August he had a cyst removed from his eye at Walter Reed Hospital. When it seemed he was about ready to go home, he broke a rib in a fall. At Pinehurst early in 1959, not long after his 78th birthday, Marshall had a stroke. A month or so later, he suffered another stroke, this one more severe. By March he had been transferred from Pinehurst to Walter Reed Hospital in Washington. For a time he seemed to get a bit better. He could sit up in a wheelchair and visit with old friends who dropped by. Some days he recognized them, and greeted them in a low whisper. Other days he seemed stronger and exchanged with army friends the stories of old soldiers. Eventually his condition worsened, and he lay in a near coma. Still, past comrades came to pay their respects: Eisenhower, Truman, even Winston Churchill, who stood at the doorway to his room with tears in his eyes. To be with him daily, Katherine stayed in a guest cottage nearby.

Near the end, Rose Page Wilson, Marshall's goddaughter, came to visit him one day at Walter Reed. When she walked into the room, he was sleeping, curled on his side. She remembered the many times she had visited "Colonel Marshall," as she called him, long ago as a small child, when Lily was alive. She would come into

their room to tell them good night. Just to make her laugh, Marshall would go through an elaborate nighttime ritual. Raising his arms high, he would strain as if to reach the ceiling; then he would hunch his shoulders this way and that. Next he would sit on his side of the bed, stretch out his long legs stiffly in front of him, and throw his feet into bed. Pulling up the covers, he would lean over to kiss Lily, then give a loud, long yawn. After that he would cry out, "Oh, Min, this bed feels so good to I," mimicking a line from one of his favorite comic strips, *The Gumps*. Then, once more for emphasis, he would shout, "Oh, Min!" burst out laughing, bury his face in his pillow, and pretend to snore.[78] Marshall's antics never failed to get a laugh from his goddaughter and Lily. Years later, Rose would remember that ritual on nights when she was especially tired. Now, she looked at her beloved godfather sleeping peacefully. Rose leaned forward and pulled the covers up a bit. Then she said, "Oh, Min, this bed feels so good to I." At last George C. Marshall was due a good long rest.

General Marshall died on October 16, 1959, just a couple of months shy of his 79th birthday. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery, a final posting for a good soldier.

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Cartoonist Bill Mauldin's eulogy to George C. Marshall as it appeared in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*

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The countless young people who will enjoy and learn from this curriculum are the direct beneficiaries of this support and hard work.

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A Note on Sources

Though much has been written about General Marshall, some sources were especially helpful in preparing this narrative. The starting place for any study of General George C. Marshall is Forrest Pogue's definitive 4-volume biography, *George C. Marshall*, and *George C. Marshall Interviews and Reminiscences for Forrest C. Pogue*, edited by Larry and Joellen Bland. Other important sources focusing on military and diplomatic aspects of Marshall's life included Mark Stoler's scholarly work, *George C. Marshall: Soldier-Statesman of the American Century*, and Ed Cray's comprehensive biography, *George C. Marshall, Soldier and Statesman*. Alan Saunder's information-rich, highly readable, *George C. Marshall, A General for Peace* was valuable for this project because it was written with young adult or general readers in mind. For insights into the family life of General Marshall, Katherine Marshall's *Together: Annals of an Army Wife*, and his goddaughter, Rose Page Wilson's, *General Marshall Remembered*, were most useful.

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